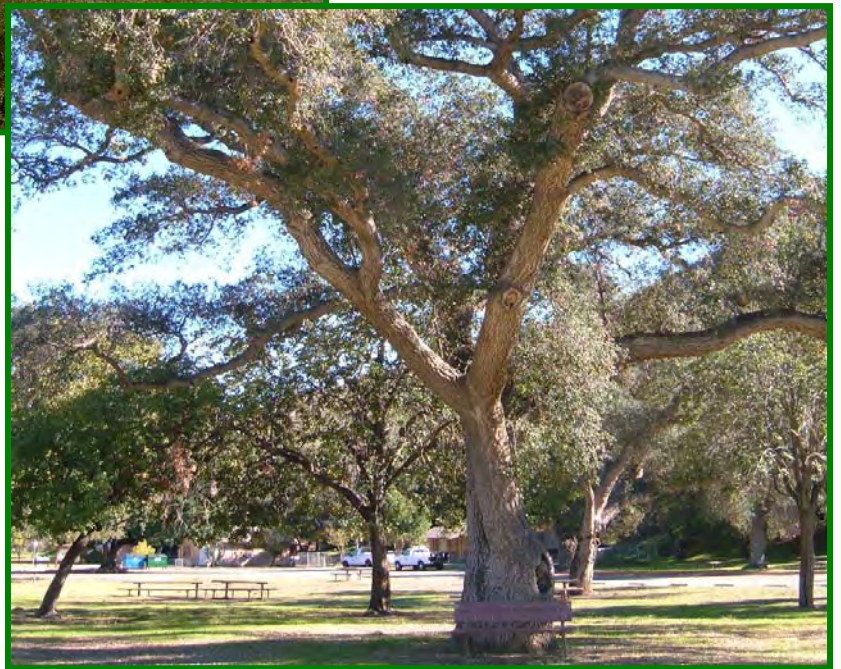


# Resource Management Plan for **El Monte County Park** **San Diego County**



June 2009

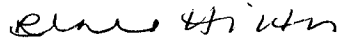


# EL MONTE COUNTY PARK

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

June 30, 2009

Approved by:



Renee Hilton, Assistant Director  
County of San Diego  
Department of Parks and Recreation

6/30/09

Date

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Purpose of Resource Management Plan .....	1
1.1.1 MSCP Background.....	2
1.1.2 County Subarea Plan .....	2
1.1.3 Framework Management Plan and Area-Specific Management Directives .....	2
1.2 Implementation .....	3
1.2.1 Management Approach.....	3
1.2.2 Responsible Parties/Designation of Land Manager .....	4
1.2.3 Regulatory Context .....	4
1.2.4 Limitations and Constraints .....	4
<b>2.0 PROPERTY DESCRIPTION.....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 Property Location.....	6
2.2 Geographical Setting .....	6
2.2.1 Site Access .....	6
2.2.2 MSCP Context .....	6
2.3 Physical and Climatic Conditions.....	10
2.3.1 Geology and Soils .....	10
2.3.2 Climate .....	12
2.3.3 Hydrology.....	13
2.3.4 Fire History.....	13
2.4 Land Use .....	13
2.4.1 Onsite Land Use .....	13
2.4.2 Adjacent Properties.....	13
2.4.3 Easements or Rights.....	16
2.5 Trails.....	16
<b>3.0 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES.....</b>	<b>18</b>
3.1 Vegetation Communities/Habitat .....	18
3.2 Plant Species.....	21
3.2.1 Plant Species Present.....	21
3.2.2 Rare, Threatened or Endangered Plants Present .....	22
3.2.3 Rare, Threatened or Endangered Plants with High Potential to Occur .....	24
3.2.4 Non-native and/or Invasive Plant Species.....	24
3.3 Wildlife Species .....	25
3.3.1 Wildlife Species Present .....	25
3.3.2 Rare, Threatened or Endangered Wildlife Present.....	28
3.3.3 Rare, Threatened or Endangered Wildlife with High Potential to Occur .....	34
3.3.4 Non-native and/or Invasive Wildlife Species .....	38
3.4 Overall Biological and Conservation Value .....	39
3.4.1 Wildlife Linkages and Corridors.....	39

<b>4.0 CULTURAL RESOURCES.....</b>	<b>41</b>
4.1 Site History .....	41
4.1.1 Pre-Contact.....	41
4.1.2 Post-Contact .....	41
4.1.3 The San Diego Flume and El Capitan Dam .....	42
4.1.4 El Monte County Park History .....	43
4.2 Native American Consultation.....	43
4.3 Cultural Resource Descriptions .....	44
4.3.1 Archaeological Resources .....	44
4.3.2 Historical Resources .....	44
4.4 Resource Significance .....	45
<b>5.0 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT .....</b>	<b>46</b>
5.1 Management Goals and Objectives .....	46
5.1.1 County-Specific .....	46
5.1.2 MSCP-Related .....	46
5.1.3 Management Directives and Implementation Measures .....	47
5.2 Biological Resources Element (A) .....	48
5.2.1 Biological Monitoring .....	48
5.2.2 MSCP Covered Species-Specific Monitoring and Management Conditions .....	50
5.2.3 Non-Native Invasive Wildlife Species Control .....	51
5.2.4 Future Research .....	52
5.3 Vegetation Management Element (B) .....	53
5.3.1 Habitat Restoration .....	53
5.3.2 Non-Native Plant Species Removal and Control.....	53
5.3.3 Fire prevention, control, and management.....	54
5.4 Public Use, Trails, and Recreation Element (C).....	55
5.4.1 Public Access.....	55
5.4.2 Fencing and Gates.....	57
5.4.3 Trail and Access Road Maintenance.....	58
5.4.4 Signage and Lighting .....	59
5.5 Operations and Facility Maintenance Element (D).....	60
5.5.1 Litter/Trash and Materials Storage .....	60
5.5.2 Hydrological Management .....	61
5.5.3 Emergency, Safety and Police Services .....	61
5.5.4 Adjacency Management Issues .....	62
5.6 Cultural Resources Element (E) .....	63
<b>6.0 REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>66</b>



**TABLES**

Table 1. Vegetation Communities within the Park.....	18
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**FIGURES**

Figure 1. Regional Location Map .....	7
Figure 2. Park Vicinity Map .....	8
Figure 3. MSCP Designations .....	9
Figure 4. Soils Map .....	11
Figure 5. Hydrology and Fire History Map.....	14
Figure 6. Park Land Use Map .....	15
Figure 7. SDG&E Distribution Line Sketch .....	17
Figure 8. Vegetation Communities .....	19
Figure 9. Special Status Plant Species .....	23
Figure 10. Special Status Wildlife Species .....	29

**APPENDICES**

Appendix A Baseline Biological Resources Evaluation, El Monte County Park

Appendix B Cultural Resources Phase I Survey and Inventory of County of San Diego El Capitan and Oakoasis Preserves and El Monte and Louis A. Stelzer Regional Parks, San Diego County, California

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

El Monte County Park (Park) is an approximately 88-acre day-use park acquired by the County of San Diego in 1921 and is one of the original County parks. The Park is located at 15805 El Monte Road, Lakeside an unincorporated community of San Diego County (County). The Park is within the upper San Diego River watershed, approximately two miles west of the El Capitan Reservoir (Figures 1 and 2). The Park consists of developed recreation areas including picnic areas, ball fields, and parking lots, as well as areas of high value natural communities. In addition, two known cultural resource sites have been identified within the Park. The Park is included in the County of San Diego's Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) preserve system.

### **1.1 Purpose of Resource Management Plan**

This Resource Management Plan (RMP) has been prepared as a guidance document to manage and preserve the biological and cultural resources within the Park, and to provide Area-Specific Management Directives (ASMDs) pursuant to the requirements of the County's MSCP Subarea Plan (County of San Diego 1997), the Framework Management Plan (County of San Diego 2001) and Sections 10.9A and 10.9B of the Implementing Agreement (County of San Diego 1998). These sections specify that the County will be responsible for managing lands which it owns or acquires within the MSCP preserve system.

This RMP will:

- a) guide the management of vegetation communities/habitats, plant and animal species, cultural resources, and programs described herein to protect and, where appropriate, enhance biological and cultural values;
- b) serve as a guide for appropriate public uses of the property;
- c) provide a descriptive inventory of the vegetation communities/habitats, plant and animal species, and the archaeological and/or historical resources that occur on this property;
- d) establish the baseline conditions from which adaptive management will be determined and success will be measured; and
- e) provide an overview of the operation and maintenance requirements to implement management goals.

Chapter 5 of this RMP includes ASMDs for El Monte County Park.

It is recognized that County-owned land is only a small portion of the MSCP preserve system. The County does ensure management of other lands that are dedicated as a conservation easement for discretionary project mitigation through requiring land developers to prepare Resource Management Plans. The County will spearhead a larger coordinated effort to ensure that other conserved

lands in the area that make up the MSCP preserve are also being monitored and managed consistent with this RMP and the overall goals of the MSCP Plan and County's MSCP Subarea Plan when a regional funding source is identified pursuant to Section 10.9C of the Implementing Agreement.

### **1.1.1 MSCP Background**

The MSCP is a cooperative habitat program that encompasses 582,000 acres and establishes a 172,000-acre preserve system in southwestern San Diego County. The MSCP covers 85 plant and animal species and 23 vegetation communities. Agencies participating in the MSCP include the County, other local jurisdictions, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). Local jurisdictions and special districts implement their respective portions of the MSCP Plan (City of San Diego 1998) through Subarea plans, which describe specific implementing mechanisms for the MSCP. The combination of the subregional MSCP Plan and Subarea plans serve as a Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) pursuant to Section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA), the Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) Program pursuant to the California NCCP Act of 1991 and the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). El Monte County Park is fully owned and operated by the County and is included under the County of San Diego South County MSCP Subarea Plan.

### **1.1.2 County Subarea Plan**

The South County MSCP Subarea Plan (MSCP Subarea Plan) was adopted in October 1997. The MSCP Subarea Plan is subdivided into three segments: Lake Hodges, South County, and Metro-Lakeside-Jamul, with El Monte County Park in the latter segment. In this segment, preserve boundaries were not designated; rather, pre-approved mitigation areas consisting of high-value habitats were identified and a set of preserve design goals and criteria for cores and linkages were established for consideration during project review.

### **1.1.3 Framework Management Plan and Area-Specific Management Directives**

According to Section 6.3.1 of the MSCP Plan and as a condition of the Implementing Agreement with the Wildlife Agencies (Section 10.10), the County was required to prepare a Framework Management Plan for the portion of the MSCP preserve within the MSCP Subarea Plan's boundaries. The Framework Management Plan sets forth management goals and objectives, along with general management directives that apply to all areas of the MSCP Subarea Plan.

The Framework Management Plan states that appropriate recreational activities shall be accommodated in concurrence with the goals of the MSCP and MSCP Subarea Plan, as follows:

- a) Public access and passive recreation are permitted uses within specified areas of the preserve. Access points, new trails and facilities, and a public control plan will be included in the specific framework habitat management plans and the area-specific management directives.
- b) Riding and hiking trails will be allowed within the preserves to allow passive recreational opportunities for the public. Passive recreation includes hiking, scientific research, bird watching, and under specified conditions and locations identified in approved projects and or management plans, mountain biking, horseback riding, sailing, sun bathing, fishing, and swimming. Equestrian, hiking, and bicycles may be allowed when in accordance with approved management plans and are consistent with the County of San Diego Subarea Plan. All recreational activities will be required to avoid impacts to narrow endemics or unique critical populations of specific species, unless the activities are in “take” authorized areas as identified or allowed under the MSCP.

The Framework Management Plan incorporates a requirement for the subsequent preparation and implementation of ASMDs. These directives are required to be developed following baseline surveys using generally accepted practices and procedures for management of biological preserves, and in compliance with the criteria established by the Framework Management Plan and Table 3-5 of the MSCP Plan. They are intended to be specific management actions that are appropriate for the habitats and species found in a local area and take into account the particular circumstances of the given area. In addition to addressing the general directives of the Framework Management Plan and species-specific management requirements of MSCP Table 3-5, ASMDs are required to address fuel management activities. Chapter 5 of this RMP includes ASMDs for El Monte County Park.

## **1.2 Implementation**

### **1.2.1 Management Approach**

A key concept of the MSCP is the use of “Adaptive Management Techniques” directed at the conservation and recovery of individual species. This term refers to modifying management actions when monitoring of the resources indicates that changes are needed. It is particularly useful where there is uncertainty regarding the efficacy of certain management measures and/or the needs of target species. Adaptive management and an associated monitoring program are designed to inform land managers of the status and trends of covered species, natural communities, and landscapes in a manner that provides data to allow informed management actions and decisions.

It is anticipated that the recommended management actions provided in this RMP will be dynamic in nature. Applying adaptive management, the effectiveness and appropriateness of recommended management actions would

be determined through review of management goal and objective achievement so that changes can be made to management directives and implementation measures as needed. Adaptive management techniques depend upon the specific issues impacting the resources. Therefore, the techniques herein may be subject to change or revisions when applied. Additionally, the monitoring protocols/requirements for MSCP covered species and habitats are being revisited by participants of the MSCP and are subject to change based on adoption of updated protocols. It is anticipated that this RMP will be revised once every five years, as needed. The RMP may be revised on a shorter time scale if there is a change in circumstance, for example, acquisition of additional Park land.

### **1.2.2 Responsible Parties/Designation of Land Manager**

The County is responsible for management, biological monitoring, and meeting the conditions of MSCP coverage on County-owned lands conserved as part of the MSCP preserve system. The Park is fully owned and operated by the County Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) and the DPR District Park Manager assigned to the Park is the land manager. DPR will be responsible for the implementation and enforcement of the RMP.

The Park is located in the management district of one supervising park ranger, and two park rangers. Park rangers patrol the Park daily and one park ranger lives onsite. It is expected that many of the implementation measures, especially the maintenance tasks, will be carried out by the rangers who are most familiar with the site and currently patrol the Park.

### **1.2.3 Regulatory Context**

The County's park rangers manage County parks and enforce park rules and regulations pursuant to San Diego County Code of Regulatory Ordinances Title 4, Division 1, Chapter 1 County Parks and Recreation. In addition, per County Code of Regulatory Ordinance Sec 41.111, 41.112, 41.113, all wildlife, plant, historical artifacts, and geologic features are protected and are not to be damaged or removed. Any person who violates any provision of Sections 41.111, 41.112, 41.113 is guilty of a misdemeanor as provided in Sections 11.116, 11.117, and 11.118 of this Code, punishable by fines up to \$2,500 a day for each day the person violates these sections. The park rangers will contact law enforcement who will cite the offending individual. In addition, if an individual does not comply with signs within a facility and ignores park ranger instructions, the individual could potentially be charged with a misdemeanor by law enforcement.

### **1.2.4 Limitations and Constraints**

Implementation and the timing of many of the management directives will be based on funding in any fiscal year and will be determined through the DPR Operations Division who will prioritize park/preserve needs in their work plan for

the fiscal year based on the priority of the directives in the RMP for each park/preserve.



## **2.0 PROPERTY DESCRIPTION**

### **2.1 Property Location**

The Park is located at 15805 El Monte Road, Lakeside, San Diego County, California, within Assessor's Parcel Number 390-060-22. The Park is located within the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) El Cajon Mountain quadrangle, within the El Cajon Land Grant (Figure 1).

### **2.2 Geographical Setting**

The Park is surrounded by El Capitan Mountain and the El Capitan Reservoir to the east, portions of El Capitan Preserve to the north and west, and sparse residential development associated with the communities of Blossom Valley to the south and Lakeside to the southwest. The Park is located in the upper San Diego River watershed, and is situated on the outer floodplain of the upper San Diego River which flows through the northern portion of the Park property (Figures 1 and 2).

The natural setting within the Park is characterized by a ravine along the northern boundary of the Park through which the San Diego River flows. To the south, a coastal foothill rises to steep north and south-facing slopes with occasional large granitic boulders and exposed bedrock. Elevations within the Park range between approximately 1,600 feet (274 meters) above mean sea level (AMSL) along a hill on the southern portion of the Park, and approximately 900 feet (487 meters) AMSL in the northern portion of the property within the San Diego River.

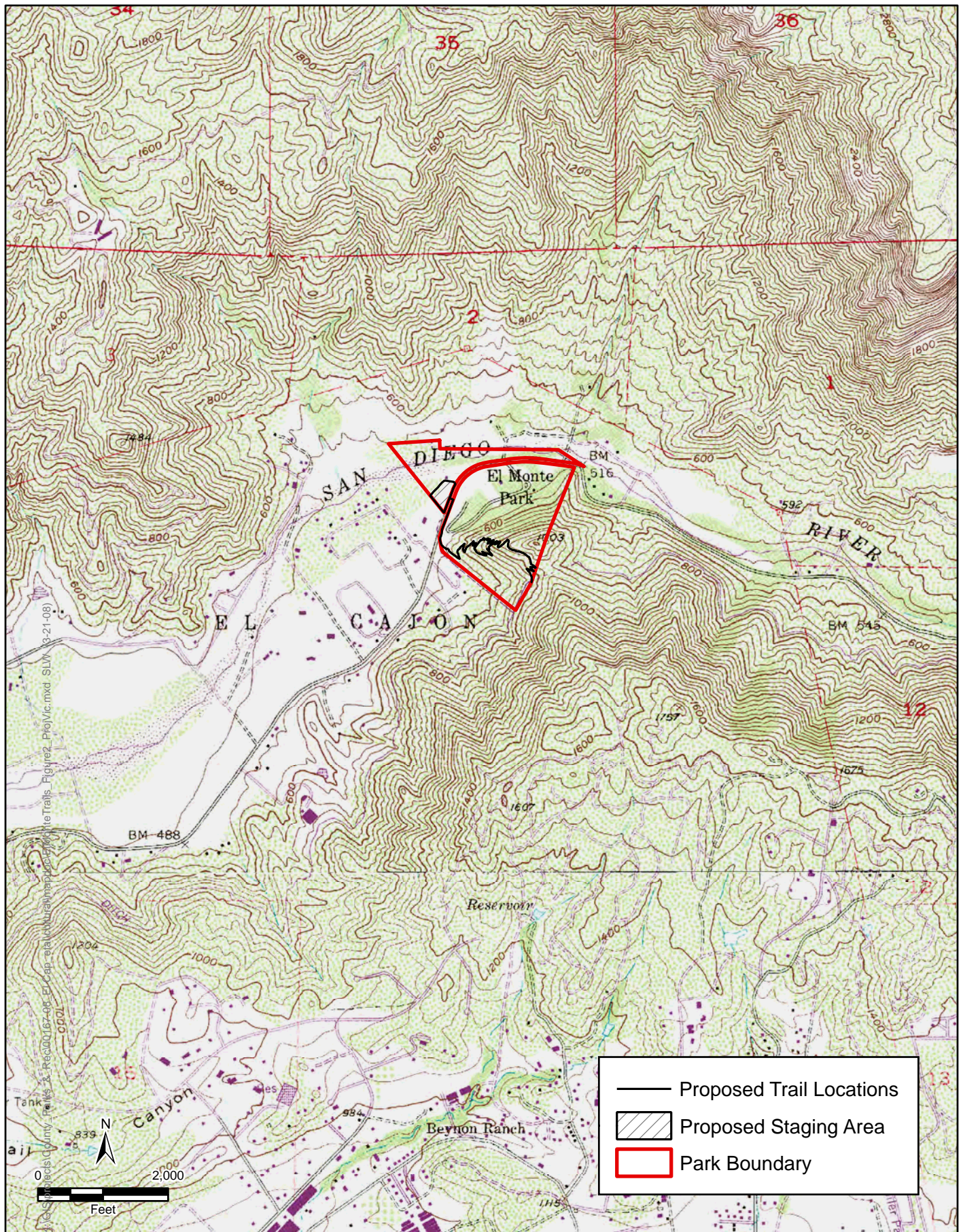
#### **2.2.1 Site Access**

The Park is accessible via El Monte Road off of Lake Jennings Park Road, north of Interstate 8 and east of State Route 67. El Monte Road bisects the Park and provides direct access through a gated entrance along the south side of the road to the fenced and developed portion of the Park and parking areas. An existing road crossing provides pedestrian access to the northern portion of the Park. The Park is open to the public daily between 9:30 and sunset and is closed Christmas Day.

#### **2.2.2 MSCP Context**

The Park is included within the Metro-Lakeside-Jamul segment of the County's MSCP South County Subarea Plan. The undeveloped portions of the Park to the north and south of El Monte Road are identified as Pre-Approved Mitigation Area (PAMA) and are considered part of the MSCP preserve (Figure 3).

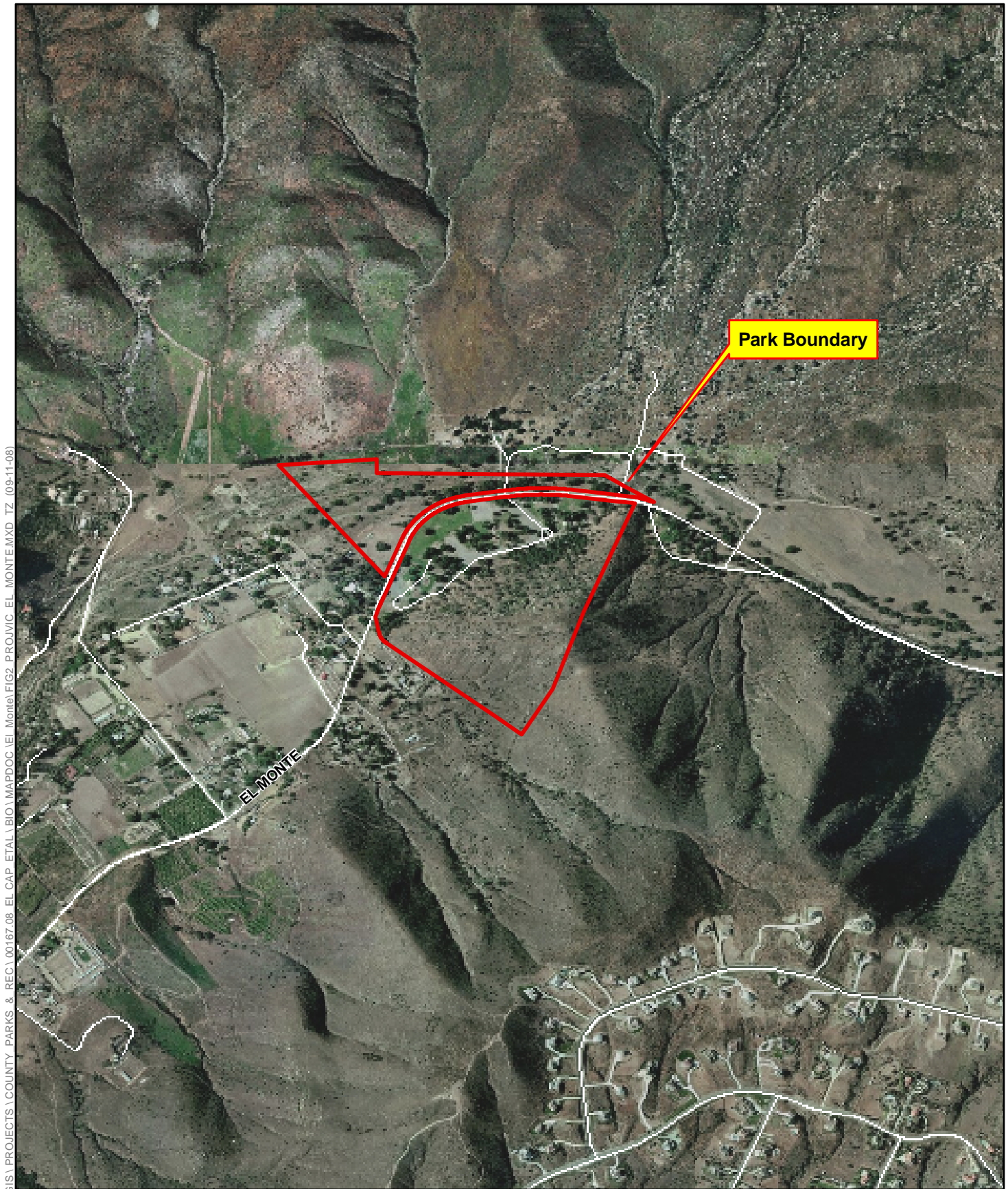




SOURCE: USGS 7.5' Quadrangle El Cajon Mountain 1955 (Photorevised 1988)

**Figure 1**  
**Regional Location**  
**El Monte County Park**

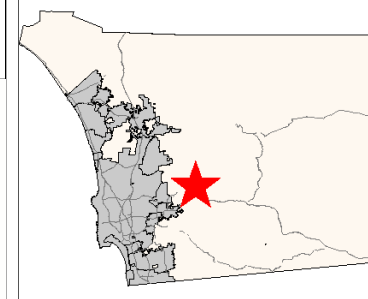
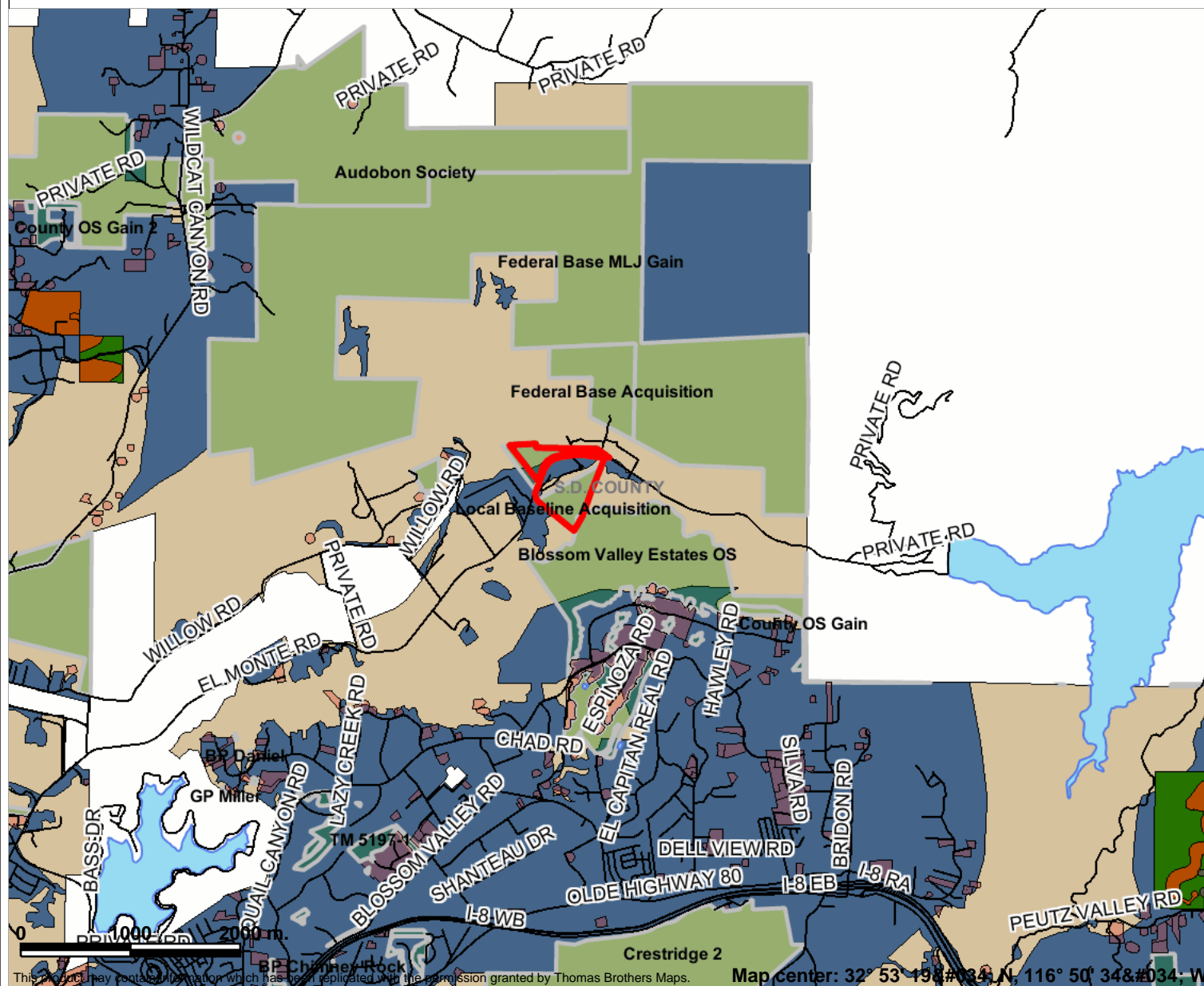




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SOURCE: ESRI Imagery

**Figure 3. El Monte County Park MSCP Designations**



**Legend**

- ~ Streets
- Water Bodies
- Water Bodies
- Habitrak 2005 Data
- Habitrak Gain
- Habitrak Loss
- MSCP\_Designations - South
- Hardline Preserve
- Pre-Approved Mitigation Area (PAMA)
- Major Amendment Area
- Minor Amendment Area
- Minor Amendment Area Subject to Special Considerations
- Conserved Subject to Agreement with Wildlife Agencies
- Santa Fe Valley Open Space II
- Santa Fe Valley 'D' Designator
- Otay Ranch Areas Where No Take Permits will be Issued
- Take Authorized Area
- Unincorporated Land in Metro-Lakeside-Jamul Segment
- Other
- Incorporated Areas
- S.D. COUNTY
- Other



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## **2.3 Physical and Climatic Conditions**

### **2.3.1 Geology and Soils**

The Park is situated atop the southern California batholith consisting of Cretaceous granitic rocks. These rocks form the majority element of this massive feature that underlies roughly two-fifths of San Diego County. In the Park, this exposed granitic bedrock is comprised of the Woodson Mountain Granodiorite Formation consisting principally of granodiorite with minor granite and quartz diorite (tonalite) (Strand 1962; Weber 1963). The San Diego River drains east-west through the project area and has contributed massive deposits of Late Quaternary alluvium.

Several general soil associations are represented within the Park and include: the Cieneba series, Ramona series, Riverwash, and Tujunga series (Figure 4). Each of these series is described in detail below.

#### **Cieneba Series**

The Cieneba soil series is characterized as excessively drained very shallow to shallow, coarse sandy loams and is usually found on slopes ranging from 5 to 75 percent. It is found on uplands at elevations ranging from 200 to 3,000 feet (61 to 914 meters) AMSL. It is usually 10 to 20 inches thick and medium acidic. The topsoil ranges from brown to dark brown in color and coarse sandy loam to sandy loam in texture. The layer below this consists of weathered granodiorite. Runoff is high to very high and the erosion hazard is very high. Boulders and rock outcrops are present. Specific soil types found at the Park consist of Cieneba coarse sandy loam (30 to 65 percent slopes, eroded) and Cieneba-Fallbrook rocky sandy loam (30 to 65 percent slopes, eroded). These soils occur south of the river valley on steep slopes and support open coast live oak woodland and coastal sage scrub vegetation.

#### **Ramona Series**

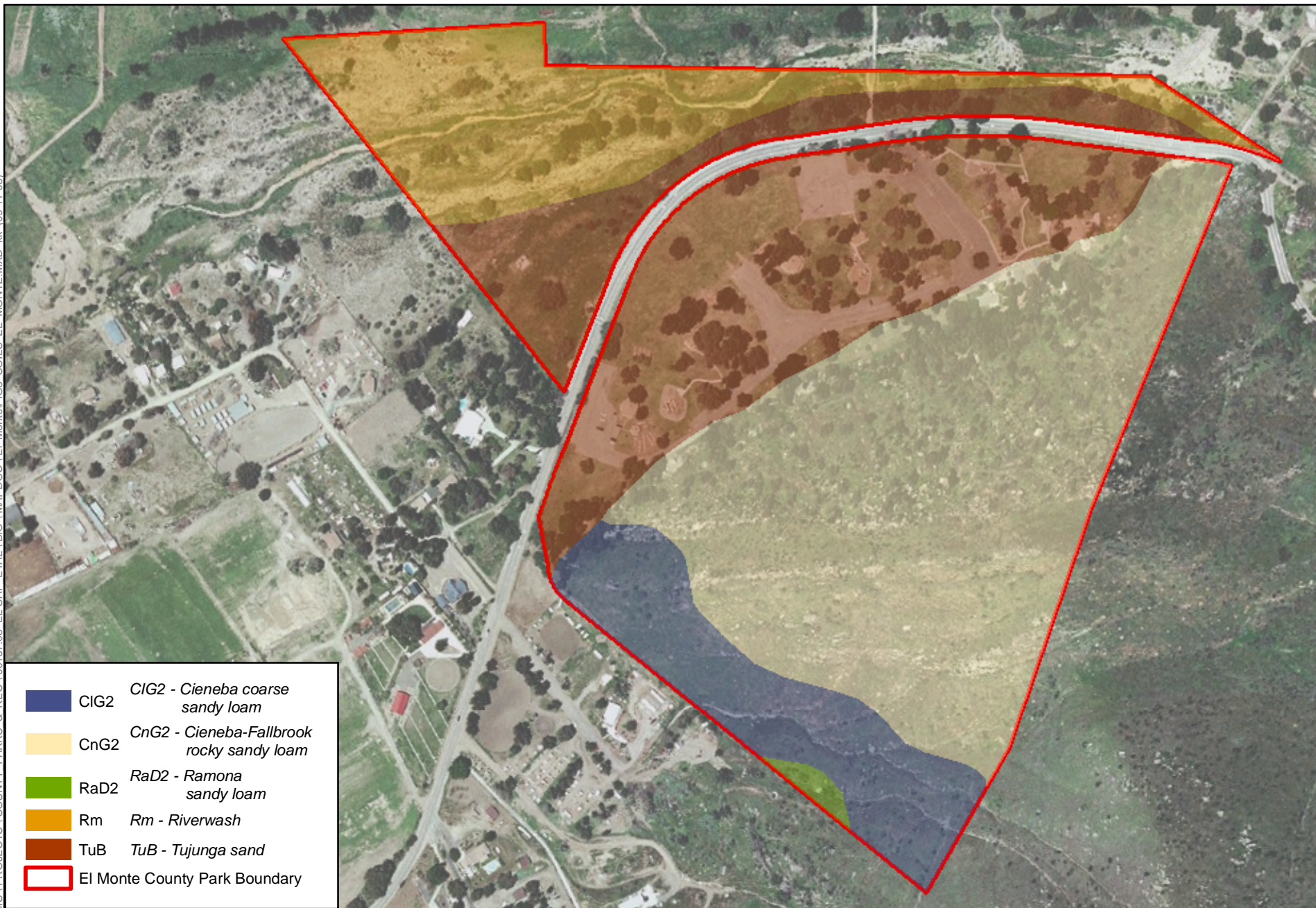
The Ramona soil series is characterized by well-drained, very deep sandy loams over sandy clay loam sub-soils. These soils are usually found on mountainous uplands at elevations ranging from 200 to 1,800 feet (61 to 547 meters) AMSL. These soils developed from weathered granitic rocks and the surface layer is usually a yellowish-brown sandy loam 17 inches thick over brown sandy clay over 40 inches thick. The specific soil type found in the Park is Ramona sandy loam (9 to 15 percent slopes, eroded). This soil type occurs near the southern boundary of the Park and supports coastal sage scrub vegetation.

#### **Riverwash**

Riverwash occurs throughout the stream channel and immediate stream banks along the San Diego River. Riverwash is a term used to collectively refer to



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SOURCE: ESRI Imagery



unconsolidated sands, gravels, and cobbles that occur in intermittent or ephemeral stream courses. This soil is often barren due to scour from storm events. Within the Park this soil type occurs exclusively along the river bottom and supports sparse woodland and coastal sage scrub vegetation.

### Tujunga Series

The Tujunga soil series is characterized by very deep excessively drained sands derived from recent granitic alluvium, and is usually found on slopes ranging from 0 to 5 percent. These soils are located on alluvial fans and floodplains between sea level and 1,500 feet (457 meters) AMSL. The surface layer is usually brown sand approximately 14 inches thick, over pale brown coarse sand over 60 inches thick. Permeability is rapid in this soil and runoff is very slow. The specific soil type found in the Park is Tujunga sand (0 to 5 percent slopes). These soils occur on the outer floodplain of the upper San Diego River and support riparian woodland and oak woodland within the Park.

### **2.3.2 Climate**

A semi-permanent, Pacific high-pressure cell, located over the Pacific Ocean, dominates San Diego County's climate. This cell drives the dominant on-shore circulation, maintaining clear skies for much of the year. Summers at the Park are typically warm and dry, while winters are mild with occasional rain (USDA 1973).

The Western Regional Climate Center, a collaborative project of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency and the Desert Research Institute, maintains a climatic station in El Cajon, the closest such station to the Park. Data collected at the station indicate that the area experiences a normal mean temperature of approximately 65 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) (18.3 degrees Celsius; °C), with a mean maximum temperature of 77.8°F (25.4°C) and a mean minimum of 52.4°F (11.3°C). The El Cajon area tends to experience more sunshine than the coastal regions of southern California due to its inland location. In a normal year, precipitation at the Park averages 15 to 18 inches and falls mostly in the winter and spring (San Diego County Flood Control District 2007).

A predominant feature of the local climate is the sea-breeze/land-breeze cycle. During the daytime, particularly in the summer, on-shore winds move inland with speeds of approximately seven to ten miles per hour (mph). Easterly land breezes of approximately two to four mph often occur at night. Surrounding rugged terrain, which induces turbulence into the airflow, modifies the influence of this cycle. This cycle is also periodically affected by land airflow that dominates weather patterns. The most widely recognized of these are the Santa Ana conditions, during which strong, hot and dry easterly winds prevail for two- or three-day periods.

### **2.3.3 Hydrology**

The Park is situated within the San Diego River Watershed area. Designated beneficial uses for the San Diego River and its tributaries include: municipal and domestic supply; agricultural supply; industrial service supply; industrial process supply; contact and non-contact water recreation; warm freshwater habitat; cold freshwater habitat; wildlife habitat; and rare, threatened, or endangered species habitat (California RWQCB 1994). Jurisdictional waters are located along the northern Park boundary and consist of the main low-flow channel of the San Diego River approximately two miles downstream of the El Capitan Reservoir (Figure 5).

### **2.3.4 Fire History**

According to the County of San Diego fire burn history data, portions of the Park have burned in 1929, 1942, 1954, and 1970. Most recently, the northeastern and southern portions of the Park burned in the 2003 Cedar Fire; the Park did not burn during the 2007 fires (SanGIS 2008) (Figure 5). The Park is located in the Lakeside Fire Protection District.

## **2.4 Land Use**

### **2.4.1 Onsite Land Use**

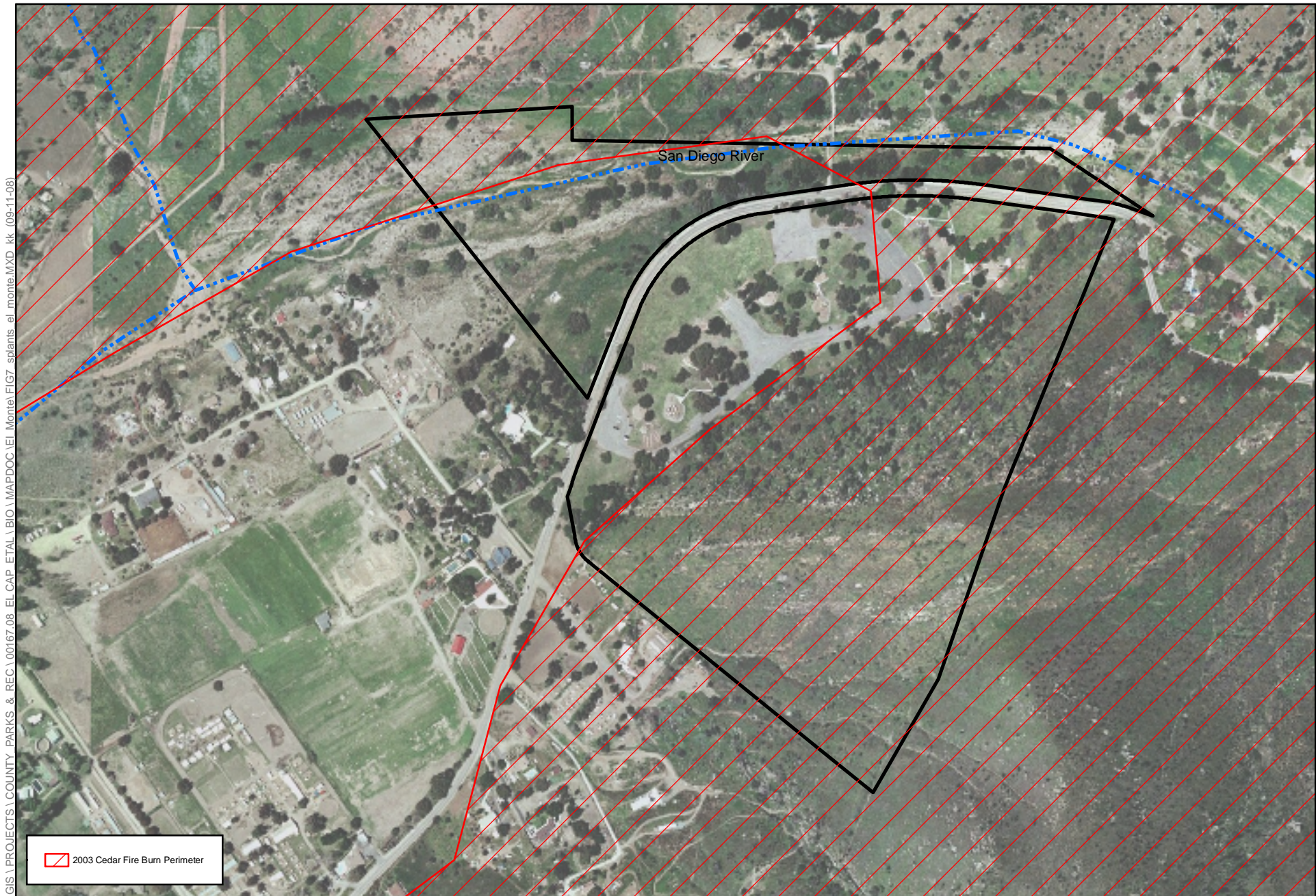
The Park is an approximately 88-acre day-use park. The Park is fenced along both sides of El Monte Road with a gated vehicle entrance along the south side of the road that provides access to the central portion of the Park. The central portion of the Park is also fenced and is developed with a ranger station, picnic areas, playground areas, a ball field, volleyball courts, public restrooms and parking lots (Figure 6). In addition, a San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) distribution power line runs through this portion of the Park.

To the north of El Monte Road, the Park contains a former ball field adjacent to dispersed coast live oak trees that were planted by the DPR Oak Tree Committee in 2000. This area also contains an existing potable water well and a pump station which is used for irrigation purposes. The Park's southern section is an undeveloped hillside dominated by coastal sage scrub habitat that is recovering from the 2003 wildfires that burned the surrounding areas.

### **2.4.2 Adjacent Properties**

The El Monte Valley and the adjacent areas contain equestrian communities. There are scattered rural residential and agricultural uses as well as a former sand mine to the west of the Park. To the north and east of the Park, steep lands rise from the valley floor to El Capitan Mountain and El Capitan Preserve. El Capitan Reservoir is located approximately two miles to the east of the Park. To the south of the Park is undeveloped steep land preserved within a biological open space easement associated with the Blossom Valley Estates development. This open space easement is managed by the Center for Natural Lands Management (CNLM).



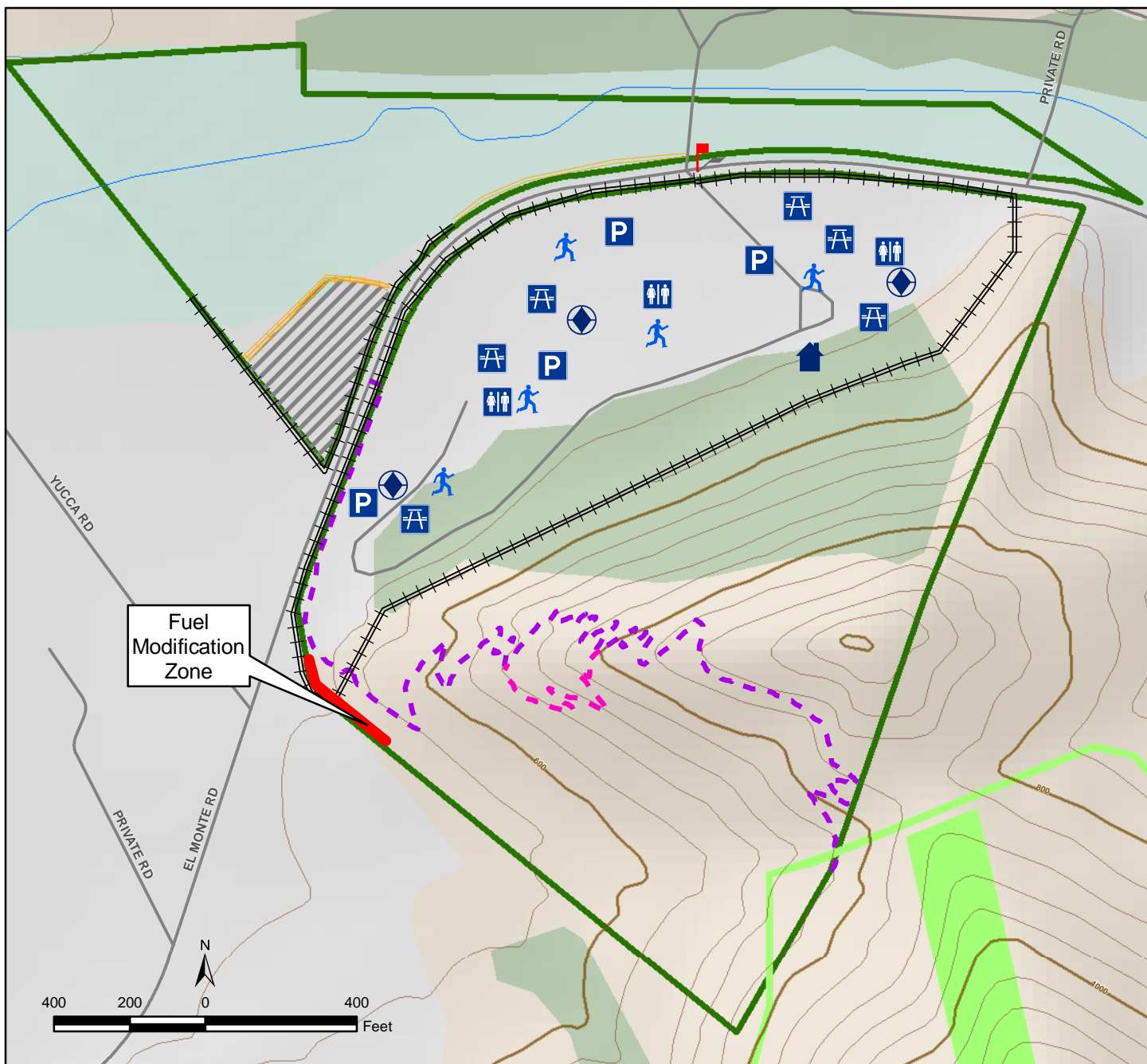


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SOURCE: ESRI Imagery







	Park Boundary		Park Entrance/Gate		Riparian and Bottomland Habitat
	Proposed Staging Area		Parking Area		Scrub and Chaparral
	Existing Fence		Park Office or Ranger Station		Woodland
	Proposed Fence		Picnic Area		Non-Native or Developed
	Proposed Trail Alignment		Restroom		200' Topographic Contours
	Alternate Trail Alignment		Play Area		40' Topographic Contours
	Trail Easement		Pavilion		River

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**Figure 6**  
**Land Use Map**  
**El Monte County Park**

### **2.4.3 Easements or Rights**

Several easements and/or right-of-ways cross through the Park boundary. The County maintains a 60-foot right-of-way along El Monte Road for provision of road improvements and other underground and overhead improvements. In addition, there is an existing County trail easement that crosses through the southern corner of the Park. There is also a potential SDG&E easement associated with the existing distribution power lines that traverse the developed portion of the Park.

SDG&E survey sketches indicate that the existing lines were in place by at least 1938 (Figure 7); however, SDG&E was unable to locate actual record of an easement. Typically, distribution easements are 12-foot wide with additional space allotted for associated anchors and guy lines. SDG&E conducts operation and maintenance activities for their facilities in accordance with the SDG&E Subregional Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) (SDG&E 1995). The SDG&E NCCP was approved by the Wildlife Agencies and is consistent with this RMP.

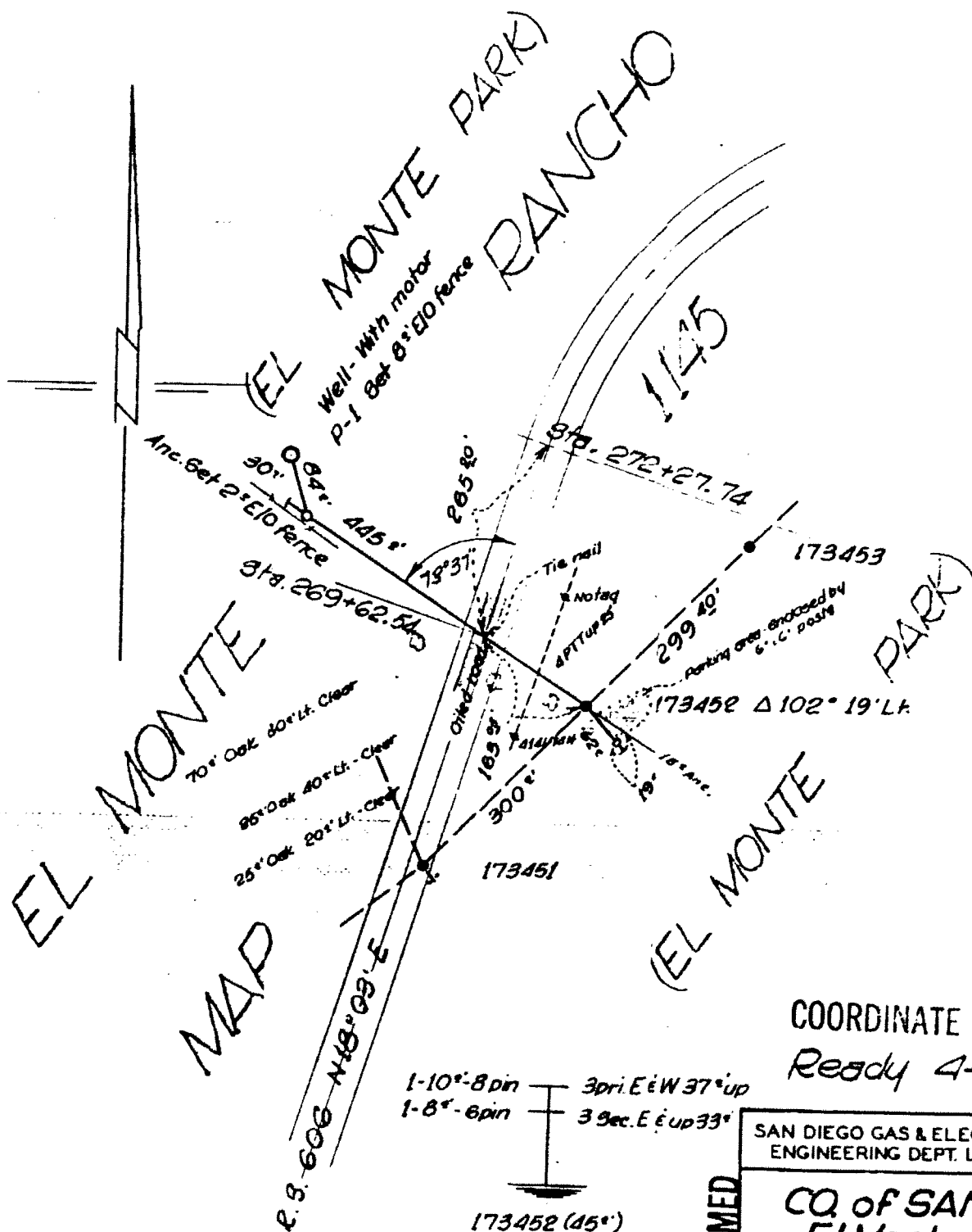
In addition, there are two existing private access roads that cross through the northern portion of the Park. These two dirt roads provide access from El Monte Road to privately owned parcels north of the Park. Easements for these private access roads are currently being formalized.

## **2.5 Trails**

Currently, the Park does not contain a formally developed trail system. However, DPR has plans to develop a multi-use (hiking, biking, and equestrian use) trail and equestrian staging area within the Park (Figure 6). This project would include the construction of an approximately one-mile trail linkage within the southern portion of the Park and a 1.4-acre equestrian staging area in the northwest area of the Park. The proposed trail is considered a high priority trail within the County Trails Program's Community Trails Master Plan as it would provide a connection for Blossom Valley to the Park and the El Monte Valley (County of San Diego 2005).

The proposed trail would connect to an existing trail easement, the Flume Trail, dedicated as part of the Blossom Valley Estates development that adjoins El Monte Park to the south. The proposed two- to four-foot wide trail will be surfaced with native soil and/or rock and will wind in an approximate northwest direction, traversing an undeveloped hillside before entering the developed Park area west of an oak grove. The trail will then cross El Monte Road at an existing crossing in order to connect to a proposed staging area on the north side of the road. The proposed equestrian staging area would replace an existing baseball/batting area. The new staging area will feature a natural surface parking lot and will remove an existing batting backstop. Environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) will be completed for all proposed trail and staging areas prior to construction.

Figure 7. SDG&E 1952 Distribution Line Sketch  
El Monte County Park



COORDINATE INDEXED  
Ready 4-1-52

SAN DIEGO GAS & ELECTRIC COMPANY  
ENGINEERING DEPT. LAND DIVISION

CQ of SANDIEGO  
El Monte Park

SURVEYED BY *Reese* DRAWN BY *S. Gordon*  
DATE *4-29-52*  
SCALE *1" = 200'*  
R/W OK  
OK TO INSTALL *OK*  
SURVEY SKETCH NO.  
**C-1320**  
DATE *5-9-52*

MICROFILMED

Profile Flat

L-60  
Survey V-78



### 3.0 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

In 2008 (February to September) Jones & Stokes Associates, Inc. conducted baseline biological resources surveys of the Park. The results of these surveys can be found in the biological resources report entitled, *Baseline Biological Resources Evaluation, El Monte County Park*, dated December 2008, and attached as Appendix A. The survey results were used in the preparation of this RMP.

The 2008 surveys documented five land cover types and 231 species that were detected throughout the Park. These surveys detected 137 plant species, 52 bird species, 20 mammal species (three small mammals, four medium and large bodied mammals, and 13 bats), seven herpetiles (one amphibian and six reptiles), and 15 invertebrate species. This list includes 17 sensitive species, of which three wildlife species are MSCP-covered species.

#### 3.1 Vegetation Communities/Habitat

Vegetation communities and land cover types present within the Park consist of southern coast live oak riparian woodland, open coast live oak woodland, Diegan coastal sage scrub, disturbed habitat and developed lands (Figure 8, Table 1). A description of the vegetation communities and the dominant plant species detected during the survey are found below.

**Table 1. Vegetation Communities within the Park**

<b>Vegetation Community</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
Southern Coast Live Oak Riparian Woodland*	12.9
Open Coast Live Oak Woodland	20.2
Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub	29.2
Disturbed Habitat	3.4
Developed**	22.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>87.8</b>

\* includes acreage for non-vegetated channel

\*\* includes acreage for landscaped areas, parking lots and structures

#### Southern Coast Live Oak Riparian Woodland (Holland Code 61310)

Southern coast live oak riparian woodland is a dense evergreen sclerophyllous riparian woodland dominated by coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*). According to Holland (1986), it is richer in herbs and poorer in understory shrubs than other riparian communities. It typically occurs in bottom lands and outer floodplains along larger streams, on fine-grained, rich alluvium.



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SOURCE: ESRI Imagery

Figure 8  
Vegetation Communities  
El Monte County Park

A total of 12.9 acres of coast live oak riparian woodland occurs along both sides of the intermittent stream channel (upper San Diego River) that flows through the northern portion of the Park. This vegetation community intergrades into Diegan coastal sage scrub and disturbed habitat along the outer margins of the floodplain and includes the non-vegetated channel described below. Areas mapped as riparian woodland contain an open canopy of oaks with total tree cover near 50 percent. Throughout the canyon bottom, these habitat types include a mixture of mature and sapling oaks. Plant diversity is low within these habitat types due to the dense canopy cover and presence of non-native understory. However, additional native plant species also observed in the understory included herbs and shrubs typical of Diegan coastal sage scrub such as western ragweed (*Ambrosia psilostachya*), California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), and California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*).

#### Non-Vegetated Channel (Holland Code 13200)

Non-vegetated stream channel occurs in ephemeral and intermittent drainages that are dominated by riverwash (composed of unconsolidated cobbles, rocks, and sand), or exposed silt, sand, and clay substrates. Plant growth in non-vegetated stream channels is generally restricted by lack of water availability during much of the year, seasonal scouring effects during high flow conditions, or deposition of heavy rocks and sediments low in organic matter (Holland 1986).

Non-vegetated stream channel, also known as non-wetland waters of the U.S., within the Park include the main channel of the upper reach of the San Diego River. For the purpose of mapping vegetation communities, the non-vegetated channel was included in the acreage calculations for southern coast live oak riparian woodland. The river is braided in this area and includes many high-flow channels adjacent to the main low-flow channel. This segment of the San Diego River is under the joint jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), the CDFG and the County.

#### Open Coast Live Oak Woodland (Holland Code 71161)

Open coast live oak woodland is typically dominated by coast live oak trees that reach 30 to 80 feet (nine to 24 meters) in height. The shrub layer within this habitat is usually poorly developed while the herb layer is continuous and typically dominated by non-native grasses. This community typically occurs on north-facing slopes and shaded ravines in southern California (Holland 1986).

Approximately 20.2 acres of open coast live oak woodland at the Park is present on a steep north-facing slope and consists of scattered oaks with an understory of coastal sage/chaparral scrub. Coast live oak was the dominant plant species with occasional Engelmann oak (*Quercus engelmannii*) and toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*) forming the upper canopy. California sagebrush, laurel sumac (*Malosma laurina*), and other native shrubs were also present in this vegetative community.



### Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub (Holland Code 32500)

Diegan coastal sage scrub is a native habitat type composed of a variety of soft, low, aromatic shrubs characteristically dominated by drought-deciduous species such as California sagebrush, California buckwheat, and sages (*Salvia* spp.), with scattered evergreen shrubs including lemonadeberry (*Rhus integrifolia*), laurel sumac, and toyon. It typically develops on south-facing slopes and other xeric situations (Holland 1986).

A total of 29.2 acres of Diegan coastal sage scrub occurs within the Park on the south-facing slopes in the southern portion and also north of the San Diego River adjacent to the oak woodlands. The vegetation is highly variable throughout the Park as it is recovering from the 2003 Cedar Fire, but generally consists of sparse California sagebrush, white sage (*Salvia apiana*), California buckwheat, and deerweed (*Lotus scoparius*) interspersed with non-native grasses. Diegan coastal sage scrub observed on the Park also includes smaller stands of laurel sumac and a large variety of native herbs. Sensitive plants associated with coastal sage scrub within the Park include California black walnut (*Juglans californica*) and San Diego sunflower (*Viguiera laciniata*).

Coastal sage scrub habitat within the Park is currently considered low quality with low potential to support sensitive species such as coastal California gnatcatcher. Passive revegetation is ongoing and the recovery of this habitat will be monitored within the Park.

### Disturbed Habitat (Holland Code 11300)

Disturbed habitat within the Park consists of a 3.4-acre area that was formerly used as a ball field.

### Developed Land (Holland Code 12000)

Developed land within the Park consists of 22.1 acres of existing roads, buildings, and infrastructure.

## **3.2 Plant Species**

### **3.2.1 Plant Species Present**

Floristic inventories detected 137 plant species at the Park. The Baseline Biological Resources Evaluation (Appendix A) includes the complete list of all species observed during the surveys.

### 3.2.2 Rare, Threatened or Endangered Plants Present

A special-status plant species is one listed by federal or state agencies as threatened or endangered; considered to be of special status by one or more special interest groups, such as the California Native Plant Society (e.g., CNPS List 1, 2, 3, and 4 Plant Species); is included on the County's Sensitive Plant list (Group A, B, C, or D Listed Plants); or is covered under the MSCP.

Four special status plant species were detected at the Park (Figure 9) including: delicate clarkia (also known as Campo clarkia) (*Clarkia delicata*), San Diego sunflower (*Viguiera laciniata*), California black walnut (*Juglans californica*) and Engelmann oak (*Quercus engelmannii*). Each of these species is addressed below in more detail.

#### Delicate Clarkia (also known as Campo Clarkia) (*Clarkia delicata*)

##### *CNPS List 1B, San Diego County Group A*

Delicate clarkia is an annual wildflower that is typically found on the periphery of oak woodland habitats and within cismontane chaparral. This species occurs within and adjacent to the southern coast live oak riparian woodland along the northern portion of the Park.

#### San Diego Sunflower (*Viguiera laciniata*)

##### *CNPS List 4, San Diego County Group D*

San Diego sunflower is associated with arid Diegan coastal sage scrub at a variety of elevations. In San Diego County, its distribution is primarily south of Highway 78 in San Diego County to the international border. The species occurs as a co-dominant shrub within the coastal sage scrub at the southern portion of the Park.

#### California Black Walnut (*Juglans californica*)

##### *CNPS List 4, San Diego County Group D*

California black walnut is a deciduous tree found in open savannah and woodland habitats at elevations generally below 100 feet (300 meters) AMSL. One sapling black walnut was found on the Park on a south-facing slope in the southern portion of the Park. This species was not observed growing in its typical bottomland habitat.

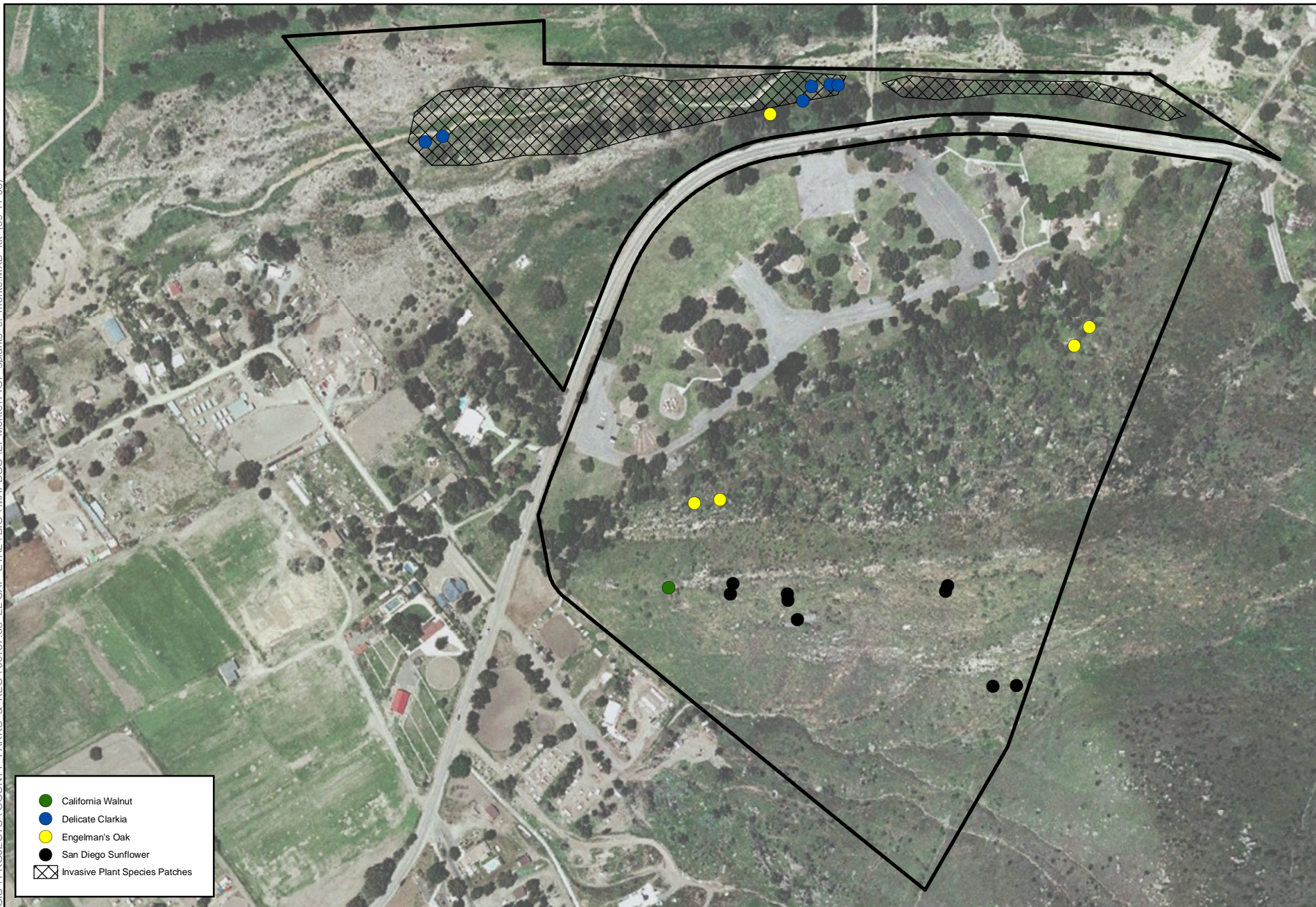
#### Engelmann Oak (*Quercus engelmannii*)

##### *CNPS List 4, San Diego County Group D*

Engelmann oak is commonly found in the foothills between 500 and 4,000 feet (152 and 1,219 meters) AMSL. Growing up to 40 feet (12 meters) tall, this tree has flat,



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SOURCE: ESRI Imagery



0 200 400 800 1,200 Feet

Figure 9  
Special Status Plant Species  
El Monte County Park



grey-blue-green leaves and tolerates less water than coast live oak. Larger oaks are sometimes found growing in savannah grasslands, but it may also occur as a shrubby element within chaparral. Engelmann oaks are still relatively abundant throughout their range in southern California. Individual Engelmann oaks were found at the Park interspersed with coast live oaks, and this population represents a fairly small grouping.

### **3.2.3 Rare, Threatened or Endangered Plants with High Potential to Occur**

Only one special status plant, Lakeside Ceanothus (*Ceanothus cyaneus*), has a high potential to occur within the Park. Additional information on this species can be found in the Baseline Biological Resources Evaluation (Appendix A).

#### Lakeside Ceanothus (*Ceanothus cyaneus*)

*CNPS List1B, San Diego County Group A, MSCP Covered Species*

Potential exists for Lakeside ceanothus to occur within the Park within the open coast live oak woodland habitat found just south of the developed areas.

### **3.2.4 Non-native and/or Invasive Plant Species**

In general, the upland areas within the Park are dominated primarily by native or naturalized plant species. However, along the San Diego River within the southern coast live oak riparian woodland located in the northern portion of the Park, several large patches (totaling approximately 4.5 acres) of tree tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*), tamarisk (*Tamarix ramosissima*) and castor bean (*Ricinus communis*) are intermixed with the native plant species (Figure 9). These invasive, non-native species are considered California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) listed plants with overall ratings of “limited” to “high”.

Originally from Bolivia and Argentina, tree tobacco has naturalized in the southwestern United States, becoming a common weed. The species is found in wetland-riparian areas, but can be found in non-wetland areas. The leaves of tree tobacco are toxic. The Cal-IPC inventory categorizes tree tobacco as having an overall rating of “moderate”. A “moderate” rating signifies species that have substantial and apparent, but generally not severe, ecological impacts on physical processes, plant and animal communities, and vegetation structure. Their reproductive biology and other attributes are conducive to moderate to high rates of dispersal, though establishment is generally dependent upon ecological disturbance.

Tamarisk was introduced from Eurasia and is now widespread in the United States. The species is found in desert washes, riparian areas, seeps and springs. Tamarisk is associated with dramatic changes in geomorphology, groundwater availability, soil chemistry, fire frequency, and plant community composition. High amounts of leaf litter can increase the frequency of fire where tamarisk is dominant in cover; moreover, this species resprouts vigorously following fires. The Cal-IPC inventory

categorizes tamarisk as having an overall rating of “high”. A “high” rating signifies species that have severe ecological impacts on physical processes, plant and animal communities, and vegetation structure. Their reproductive biology and other attributes are conducive to moderate to high rates of dispersal and establishment. Most are widely distributed ecologically.

Native to the Ethiopian region of tropical east Africa, castor bean has become naturalized in tropical and warm temperate regions throughout the world, and is becoming an increasingly abundant weed in the southwestern United States. This species is very common along stream banks, river beds, bottom lands, and just about any hot area where the soil is well drained and with sufficient nutrients and moisture to sustain growth. The Cal-IPC inventory categorizes castor bean as having an overall rating of “limited”. A “limited” rating signifies species that are invasive, but their ecological impacts are minor on a statewide level or there was not enough information to justify a higher score. Their reproductive biology and other attributes result in low to moderate rates of invasiveness. Ecological amplitude and distribution are generally limited, but these species may be locally persistent and problematic.

### **3.3 Wildlife Species**

#### **3.3.1 Wildlife Species Present**

##### Invertebrates

A complete list of invertebrate species identified on the Park below the level of family is included in the faunal list of the Baseline Biological Resources Evaluation (Appendix A). No special-status invertebrate species are reported for the Park by the CNDDB (CDFG 2008). No special-status butterfly species or other invertebrate species were detected during the 2008 surveys and no special-status invertebrate species have high potential to occur at the Park.

##### *Butterflies*

Butterfly species observed on the Park were limited to three species: Sara’s orangetip (*Anthocaris sara*), pale swallowtail (*Papilio eurymedon*), and common white (*Pontia protodice*). No Quino checkerspot butterfly or any other special-status butterfly surveys were performed on the Park because a habitat assessment, conducted on March 10, 2008, determined that Quino checkerspot had a low to moderate potential to occur within the Park. The habitat assessment concluded that the Park was unlikely to support larval Quino checkerspot as none of the specie’s larval host plants were observed. However, the Park is within the USFWS Quino checkerspot Survey Area 2 and the Diegan coastal sage scrub that occurs in the southern portion of the Park would be considered potentially suitable foraging habitat for adult Quino butterflies. It is therefore recommended that USFWS protocol surveys be conducted within the southern portion of the Park to determine if Quino checkerspot occurs on site prior to any clearing of habitat being conducted.

Additionally, spiny redberry (*Rhamnus crocea*), the host plant for hermes copper butterfly should be avoided during any habitat clearing associated with trails.

### *Other Invertebrates*

Twelve other invertebrate species were captured in the pitfall traps associated with the herpetological arrays or observed during other fieldwork. These species were identified in the field or photographed and provided to a local entomologist to identify. No invertebrate species were collected.

### Amphibians

One amphibian species, western toad (*Bufo boreas*), was captured in the pitfall traps during the 2008 sampling at the Park. No sensitive amphibian species were detected during the 2008 surveys.

### Reptiles

Six reptile species were detected during the 2008 sampling at the Park including: side-blotched lizard (*Uta stansburiana*), western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*), southern alligator lizard (*Elgaria multicarinata*), granite spiny lizard (*Sceloporus orcutti*), common kingsnake (*Lampropeltis getula*), and gopher snake (*Pituophis catenifer*). A complete list of herpetofauna observed within the Park during the 2008 herpetological surveys is included in the faunal list of the Baseline Biological Resources Evaluation (Appendix A). No special-status reptile species were detected during the surveys and no additional sensitive herptiles are currently recorded for the Park by the CNDDDB (CDFG 2008).

### Birds

Avian species richness (total species detected) was found to be moderate at the Park. In total, 53 bird species were detected either within the Park boundary or immediately adjacent. Fifty species were detected during the point counts and three additional species were recorded during other fieldwork. These included year-round residents, winter-only species, breeding species that migrate to the Neotropics, and species that are strictly migratory through the Park, neither breeding nor wintering there. A complete list of avian species observed within the Park during the 2008 surveys is included in the faunal list of the Baseline Biological Resources Evaluation (Appendix A).

A significant component of the Park's avifauna is species that are closely associated with oak woodlands as the Park supports numerous coast live oak trees. These species include: red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*), acorn woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*), Nuttall's woodpecker (*Picoides nuttallii*), ash-throated flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*), American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), oak titmouse (*Baeolophus inornatus*), white-breasted nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*), house

wren (*Troglodytes aedon*), western bluebird (*Sialia mexicanus*), European starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), orange-crowned warbler (*Vermivora celata*), black-headed grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*), and Bullock's oriole (*Icterus bullockii*). Four raptor species were observed at the Park: red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), red-shouldered hawk, turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*) and barn owl (*Tyto alba*). The red-shouldered hawk was detected more often than the red-tailed hawk. This is expected as the species is more closely tied to oak woodlands. The lack of other hawks and owls commonly associated with oak woodlands may in part be due to the large number of American crows present at the Park. A total of 116 observations of American crow were noted during the point counts. This species is notorious for chasing out raptors, especially potential predators.

Woodpeckers construct most of the tree cavities on the Park and these provide vital nest sites for a variety of birds. At least two species of woodpeckers are present and at least seven other avian species detected nest only in cavities, including the County sensitive and MSCP-covered western bluebird. Acorn woodpeckers are resident on the Park and are numerous within the oak trees with a total of 53 observations during the point counts. This species normally stores food in highly visible granaries, consisting of acorns stored in holes. At the Park, wooden poles and oak trees are used as granaries and these are vital to the continuation of the acorn woodpecker population on site.

The nocturnal bird surveys documented no nocturnal avian species using the Park. It is possible that the American crows have chased off most nocturnal raptors that may nest in the oak woodland. The Park supports high potential for great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*) and supports low potential for western screech-owl (*Megascops kennicottii*). These species could be present in small numbers, though were not detected during the 2008 surveys. Western screech-owl may be absent from the Park due to the open, fragmentary structure of the woodlands (prefers dense woodlands). It is unclear why common poorwill (*Phalaenoptilus nuttallii*) was not detected during the surveys as there is high potential for this species to occur.

There is no reasonable potential for southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) or least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) to occur at the Park beyond rare and brief visits due to lack of suitable habitat. It is likely that other subspecies of willow flycatcher pass through the Park in spring and fall, though they were not recorded during 2008 surveys. Coastal California gnatcatchers (*Poliophtila californica californica*) have historically been documented in the general vicinity (Unitt 2004), but due to the 2003 Cedar Fire that burned a portion of the Park, the habitat is currently not appropriate for this species.

### Mammals

A complete list of mammal species observed within the Park during the 2008 surveys is included in the faunal list of the Baseline Biological Resources Evaluation (Appendix A).

### *Small Mammals*

In total, three small mammal species were recorded at the Park during small mammal trapping and other surveys. These species were detected through capture, direct observation or sign. The Park trapping results indicate that the Park does not have an abundant or diverse small mammal population as there was only one capture from one species, the northwestern San Diego pocket mouse (*Chaetodipus fallax fallax*), a special-status species. Botta's pocket gopher (*Thomomys bottae*) was also observed within the Park through sign. Anecdotally, it should be noted that the developed portions of the Park have a very large California ground squirrel (*Spermophilus beecheyi nudipes*) population.

### *Medium to Large Mammals*

A total of four medium and large mammals were detected in the Park during the 2008 surveys including: desert cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), bobcat (*Felis rufus*), and southern mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus fuliginata*). Movement of larger animals appeared to be concentrated along easily traveled routes with good visibility such as roads and ridges. Most signs of smaller animals were within natural communities with cover.

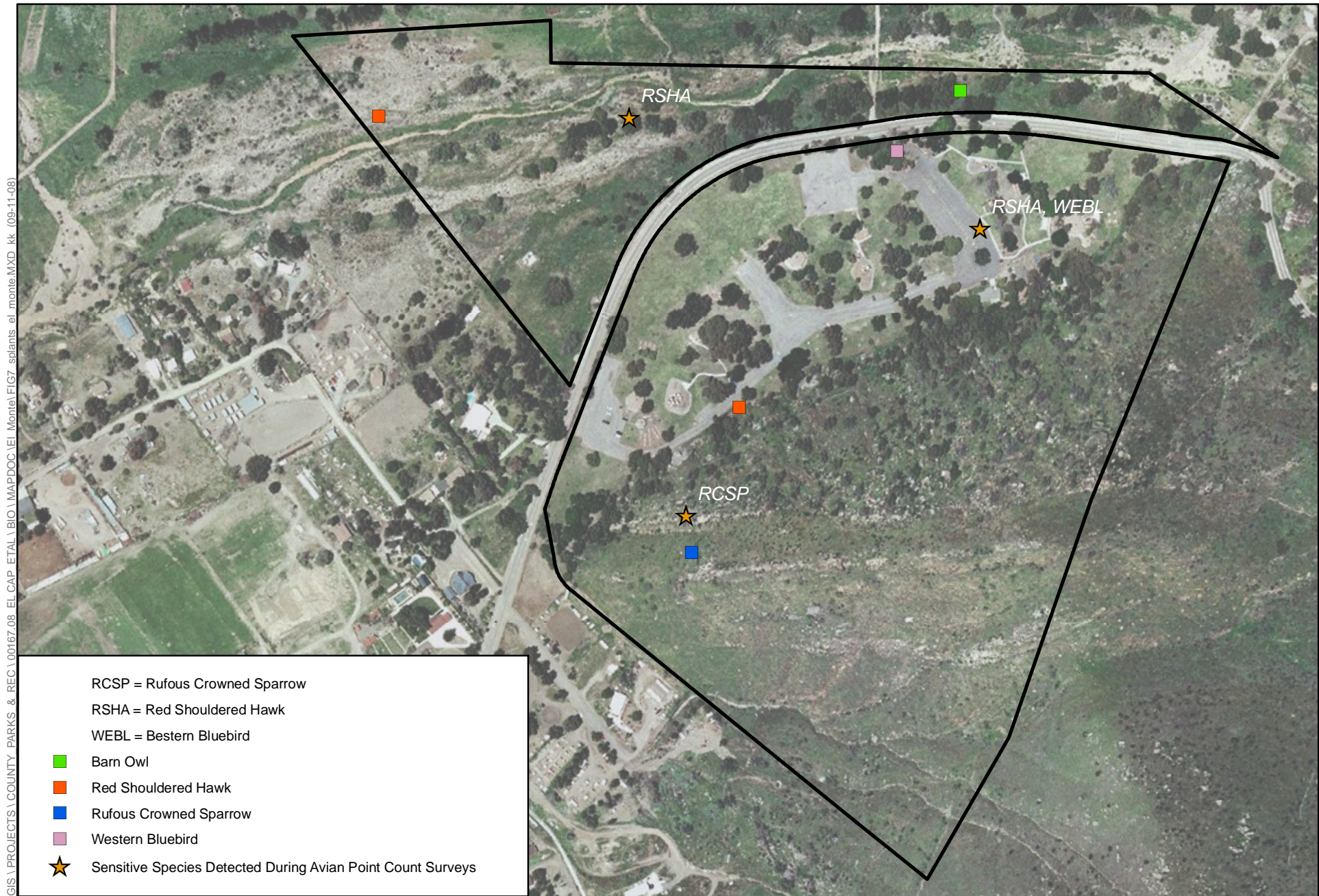
### *Bats*

A total of 13 bat species were detected during the three seasons of monitoring in 2008. The most active bat species detected were the canyon bat (*Parastrellus hesperus*), pocketed free-tailed bat (*Nyctinomops femorosaccus*), and Mexican free-tailed bat (*Tadarida brasiliensis*). Species detected infrequently included the western red bat (*Lasiurus blossevillei*), western yellow bat (*Lasiurus xanthinus*), and Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*). There were a suite of species detected during all three seasonal monitoring sessions that included the California myotis (*Myotis californicus*), small-footed myotis (*Myotis ciliolabrum*), Yuma myotis (*Myotis yumanensis*), canyon bat, pocketed free-tailed bat, Mexican free-tailed bat, and western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis*). Species detected during the spring only included the hoary bat (*Lasiurus cinereus*) and western red bat. The western yellow bat was detected only during the summer and the Townsend's big-eared bat only during the fall.

### **3.3.2 Rare, Threatened or Endangered Wildlife Present**

This section discusses special-status wildlife species observed at the Park (Figure 10). A special-status wildlife species is one listed by federal or state agencies as threatened or endangered; is included on the County's Sensitive Animal List (Group 1 or 2 Species); or is covered under the MSCP. Fourteen special-status wildlife species were detected at the Park. Each of these 14 species is addressed below in more detail.





SOURCE: ESRI Imagery



0 200 400 800 1,200 Feet

Figure 10  
 Special Status Wildlife Species  
 El Monte County Park



Red-Shouldered Hawk (*Buteo lineatus*)*San Diego County Group I*

The red-shouldered hawk was once an uncommon breeder of lowland riparian woodlands, but has been thriving in urban environments with large trees such as gum (*Eucalyptus sp.*) (Unitt 2004). On the west coast, this species is found in California and northern Baja California and is common throughout San Diego County (Unitt 2004). A red-shouldered hawk was regularly detected during the point counts with observations in May, June, July and September.

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*)*San Diego County Group I*

The turkey vulture is common during the breeding season throughout most of California. This species occurs in open stages of most habitats that provide adequate cliffs or large trees for nesting, roosting, and resting. Primarily feeding on carrion, this species is a highly specialized static soarer, foraging aerially over roads, fields, open forests, and nearly all open habitats (Zeiner et al. 1990). This species was observed overhead during general biological surveys conducted in association with the proposed trail and equestrian staging area (Jones & Stokes 2008d). Suitable foraging habitat for this species occurs within the survey area, and an individual was observed soaring over the general area during the survey.

Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*)*San Diego County Group II*

The barn owl is the owl species that is most tolerant to urban development (Unitt 2004). It will nest in buildings, nest boxes, at the base of the leaves in palm trees, and in cavities in native trees. Even though this species is tolerant of human development, dense housing communities do not provide suitable nesting habitat and loss of birds to increased traffic has a negative effect on the species (Unitt 2004). One barn owl was flushed during a diurnal visit to the Park. This species was not detected during nocturnal surveys. This bird may occasionally forage within the northern boundary of the Park and probably breeds nearby.

Western Bluebird (*Sialia mexicana*)*San Diego County Group II, MSCP Covered Species*

The western bluebird is a stocky blue bird with a chestnut chest and is considered common in the foothills and mountains of San Diego County. This species can usually be found in montane coniferous and oak woodlands (Unitt 2004). It can also occur in areas with scattered trees, open forests, scrubs and during the winter in the

desert. Western bluebirds breed in western North America from southern British Columbia south to central Mexico, east to western Montana and west Texas, but are absent from the Great Basin (Guinan et al. 2000). It can also winter outside its breeding range in central California and along the lower Colorado River (Guinan et al. 2000). Western bluebird numbers are declining due to loss of nesting cavities to logging, fire suppression, and competition with non-native species such as European starling and house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) (Unitt 2004). A western bluebird pair was observed near the gated entrance to the Park. They were observed onsite more than they were detected during the point counts and they most likely breed at the Park.

Southern California Rufous-Crowned Sparrow (*Aimophila ruficeps canescens*)

*San Diego County Group I, MSCP Covered Species*

The southern California rufous-crowned sparrow is a resident species that is closely associated with coastal sage scrub, steep rocky hillsides, burned chaparral, and openings in mature chaparral (Unitt 2004). Preferring open habitat with approximately 50% shrub cover, this species seeks cover in shrubs, rocks, grass, and forb patches (Dudek 2000, Unitt 2004). The Southern California subspecies is restricted to semiarid coastal sage scrub and sparse chaparral from Santa Barbara south to the northwestern corner of Baja California (Dudek 2000). Rufous-crowned sparrows are declining due to loss of appropriate habitat and are sensitive to habitat fragmentation (Unitt 2004). One southern California rufous-crowned sparrow was detected in September 2008 on the steep north-facing slope above the Park. This species may use the steep rocky slope for breeding.

Northwestern San Diego Pocket Mouse (*Chaetodipus fallax fallax*)

*State Species of Special Concern, San Diego County Group II*

The northwestern San Diego pocket mouse is typically found in coastal sage scrub, sage scrub/grassland ecotones, and chaparral (Dudek 2000). It inhabits open, sandy areas of both the Upper and Lower Sonoran areas of southwestern California and northern Baja California (Dudek 2000). This species is sensitive to habitat fragmentation and degradation, which has led to its decline. One northwestern San Diego pocket mouse was captured at the Park.

Southern Mule Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*)

*San Diego County Group II, MSCP Covered Species*

Southern mule deer are common across the western U.S. in a variety of habitats from forest edges to mountains and foothills (Whitaker 1996). Mule deer prefer edge habitats, rarely travel or forage far from water and are most active around dawn and dusk. Sign of southern mule deer was detected at the Park.

Small-Footed Myotis (*Myotis ciliolabrum*)*San Diego County Group II*

The small-footed myotis is found through most of western North America from southwestern Canada south into Mexico (BCI 2008). There is not much information on the habitat requirements of this species, but it has been documented under rock slabs and in crevices, mine tunnels, under loose tree bark, and in buildings (BCI 2008). This species hibernates in caves, typically in small groups. Reasons for decline are poorly understood as there has been little research conducted on this species. This species was detected during all three seasons of bat monitoring. There is minimal roosting habitat for this species available on site; therefore, the Park may just be used for foraging by this species.

Yuma Myotis (*Myotis yumanensis*)*San Diego County Group II*

The Yuma myotis is found throughout much of the western U.S. and up into Canada (BCI 2008). The species is always found near lakes, creeks or ponds where the species forages over the water. Typically, individuals skim low over the water and snatch up flying insects, but they can forage in other mesic areas. The species roosts by day usually in buildings or bridges, but have been documented using mines or caves (BCI 2008). Yuma myotis are threatened by loss of riparian habitat and the decline in permanent water sources in the southwest. This species was detected during all three seasons of bat monitoring. Both the roosting and foraging needs of the Yuma myotis could be supported by the Park. Their water needs may be met seasonally by the San Diego River if water flows, and year-round by the nearby El Capitan Reservoir.

Western Red Bat (*Lasiurus blossevillii*)*State Species of Special Concern, San Diego County Group II*

Western red bats are found from southern Canada, throughout the U.S., all the way down to South America (BCI 2008). Several species in the genus *Lasiurus* are commonly referred to as "tree bats" because they roost only in tree foliage. The western red bat is a typical tree bat, with a close association with cottonwoods (*Populus* sp.) and riparian areas (BCI 2008). Like all tree bats, this species is solitary, coming together only to mate and to migrate. Western red bats typically forage along forest edges, in small clearings, or around street-lights where they prefer moths (BCI 2008). Although largely undocumented, this species' decline appears to be in part due to the loss of lowland riparian forests in the Southwest. This species was only detected during the spring bat monitoring session. Both suitable roosting and foraging habitat for the western red bat occurs in the Park.

Townsend's Big-Eared Bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*)*State Species of Special Concern, San Diego County Group II*

Townsend's big-eared bat occurs throughout the drier portions of California (Zeiner et al. 1990). It is non-migratory and hibernates from approximately October through April. A wide variety of natural communities are occupied, but mesic sites are preferred. They capture a variety of prey while in flight, which is slow and maneuverable, and they are capable of hovering (Zeiner et al. 1990). The species is known to roost predominantly in caves, but will use lava tubes, mines, tunnels, buildings, and other man-made structures (BCI 2008). They are extremely sensitive to disturbance at their roosting sites and have suffered severe population declines throughout much of the U.S. (BCI 2008). This species was only detected during the fall bat monitoring session. The Townsend's big-eared bat is likely not roosting at the Park, but is instead using it for foraging. The mines located in the adjacent El Capitan Preserve provide roosting habitat for this species.

Pallid Bat (*Antrozous pallidus*)*State Species of Special Concern, San Diego County Group II*

Pallid bats are widely distributed in the southwestern United States and northern Mexico (BCI 2008). They are locally common across most of California except in the far northwest and in higher portions of the Sierra Nevada. Habitats utilized include a wide variety of grasslands, shrublands, woodlands, and forests, including mixed conifer forest (Zeiner et al. 1990). They appear to be most common in open, dry, rocky lowlands and they roost in caves, mines, as well as crevices in rocks, buildings and trees. This is a colonial species that forages low over open ground, often picking up beetles and other species of prey off the ground (Zeiner et al. 1990). Flight is slow and maneuverable, and they are able to take a wide variety of prey, including large, hard-shelled insects (Zeiner et al. 1990). They have separate night and day roosts, hibernate in winter, and the sexes segregate in summer. This species was detected during the spring and summer bat monitoring sessions. Both suitable roosting and foraging habitat for the pallid bat occurs in the Park.

Pocketed Free-Tailed Bat (*Nyctinomops femorosaccus*)*State Species of Special Concern, San Diego County Group II*

Pocketed free-tailed bats are rarely found in southwestern California. These bats live in arid desert areas and roost in crevices high on cliff faces in rugged canyons (BCI 2008). Nursery colonies are relatively small and usually include fewer than 100 individuals. This species primarily forages on large moths, especially over water. The regional status and species trends are unclear, but it is likely vulnerable to disturbance, especially at roosts, and perhaps also to threats to food supply from man-made toxins. This species was detected during all three seasons of bat

monitoring. The pocketed free-tailed bat is likely not roosting in the Park as there are no cliffs, but the adjacent El Capitan Preserve provides suitable roosting habitat for this species. The individuals detected are likely using the Park as a place to forage.

Western Mastiff Bat (*Eumops perotis*)

*State Species of Special Concern, San Diego County Group II*

Western mastiff bats are the largest native bats in the United States. This subspecies occurs from the Sierra Nevada foothills and the coastal ranges (south of San Francisco Bay) southward into Mexico (BCI 2008). In southern California, they are found throughout the coastal lowlands up to drier mid-elevation mountains, but avoid the Mohave and Colorado deserts (Zeiner et al. 1990). Habitats include dry woodlands, shrublands, grasslands, and even developed areas. This bat forages in flight on prey that is relatively small, low to the ground, and weak-flying. For roosting, this subspecies appears to favor rocky, rugged areas in lowlands with abundant suitable crevices available for day roosts (BCI 2008). Roost sites may be in natural rock or in tall buildings, large trees or elsewhere. The reasons for this subspecies' decline are poorly understood, but probably are related to disturbance, habitat loss, and perhaps widespread use of pesticides. This species was detected during all three seasons of bat monitoring. This species is likely not roosting in the Park as there are no cliffs, but the adjacent El Capitan Preserve provides suitable roosting habitat. The individuals detected are likely using the Park as a place to forage.

**3.3.3 Rare, Threatened or Endangered Wildlife with High Potential to Occur**

Additional information on the species listed below can be found in the Baseline Biological Resources Evaluation (Appendix A).

Quino Checkerspot Butterfly (*Euphydryas editha quino*)

*Federally Endangered, San Diego County Group 1*

The Park is within the USFWS Quino checkerspot Survey Area 2. This species currently has a low to moderate potential to occur within the coastal sage scrub habitat in the southern portion of the Park due to the lack of host plants onsite and the current poor condition of the coastal sage scrub habitat after the 2003 Cedar Fire. However, the potential for Quino checkerspot is expected to increase as coastal sage scrub habitat recovers from the effects of fire.

Western Spadefoot (*Scaphiopus [=Spea] hammondi*)

*State Species of Special Concern, San Diego County Group II*

This species is known to occur in the area and has high potential to occur in pooled areas along the San Diego River.

California Legless Lizard (*Anniella pulchra*)

*State Species of Special Concern, San Diego County Group II*

This species has a high potential to occur in the northern portion of the Park associated with the stream channel.

San Diego Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillii*)

*State Species of Special Concern, San Diego County Group II, MSCP Covered Species*

This species has high potential to occur in the coastal sage and native woodland habitats found at the Park; however, the portion of the San Diego River within the boundary has a large non-native ant population that may preclude this species from that area.

Coronado Skink (*Eumeces skiltonianus interparietalis*)

*State Species of Special Concern, San Diego County Group II*

This species has high potential to occur in the coastal sage, chaparral and native woodlands found at the Park.

Orange-Throated Whiptail (*Cnemidophorus hyperythrus beldingi*)

*State Species of Special Concern, San Diego County Group II, MSCP Covered Species*

This species has high potential to occur in coastal sage scrub with California buckwheat.

Coastal Western Whiptail (*Cnemidophorus tigris multiscutatus*)

*San Diego County Group II*

This species has high potential to occur in the undisturbed habitats at the Park.

Red Diamond Rattlesnake (*Crotalus ruber ruber*)

*State Species of Special Concern, San Diego County Group II*

This species has high potential to occur on the rocky slopes of the Park.



Coastal Rosy Boa (*Charina trivirgata roseofusca*)*San Diego County Group II*

This species has the potential to occur in any of the habitats found on the Park.

San Diego Ringneck Snake (*Diadophis punctatus similis*)*San Diego County Group II*

This species has high potential to occur in the northern portion of the Park associated with the riparian woodland and stream channel.

Coast Patch-Nosed Snake (*Salvadora hexalepis virgutea*)*State Species of Special Concern, San Diego County Group II*

This species has the potential to occur throughout the Park due to presence of suitable habitat.

White-Tailed Kite (*Elanus caeruleus*)*State Fully Protected Species (nesting), San Diego County Group I*

There is high potential for white-tailed kite to occur on site. There is suitable foraging and nesting habitat within the boundaries of the Park and immediately adjacent.

Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*)*San Diego County Group I, MSCP Covered Species*

Cooper's hawk has high potential to occur as there is suitable foraging and nesting habitat on site.

Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*)*State Fully Protected Species, San Diego County Group I, MSCP Covered Species*

A pair of golden eagles is known to occur at El Cajon Mountain. The Park may be used for foraging, but does not provide suitable nesting habitat for the species. Due to the known proximity of a pair, there is high potential for this species to sporadically occur at the Park for foraging purposes.

San Diego Cactus Wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus sandiegensis*)

*State Species of Special Concern, San Diego County Group I, MSCP Covered Species*

At least one San Diego cactus wren was aurally detected off-site on a slope north of the boundary of the Park on a hillside with cactus patches. As this species was not detected within the boundary of the Park, it is included on the high potential to occur category. There are some cactus patches on the slope just north of the Park that appear to be used by this species. Cactus wrens may forage within the boundary of the Park; however, there is no suitable nesting habitat within the Park.

Bell's Sage Sparrow (*Amphispiza belli belli*)

*San Diego County Group I*

Bell's sage sparrow has high potential to occur as there is suitable nesting habitat for the species on site.

Coastal California Gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila californica californica*)

*Federally Threatened, San Diego County Group I, MSCP Covered Species*

While coastal sage scrub habitat is present within the Park, this habitat was burned in the 2003 Cedar Fire and is currently not appropriate for this species; therefore, protocol surveys for coastal California gnatcatchers were not conducted in 2008 and no individuals of this species were observed during general field surveys. Coastal California gnatcatchers have historically been documented in the general vicinity with known occurrences within five miles of the Park, and this species has a high potential to occur as the coastal sage scrub habitat in the Park recovers.

Dulzura Pocket Mouse (*Chaetodipus californicus femoralis*)

*State Species of Special Concern, San Diego County Group II*

During the 2008 trapping program, 44 of the 160 animals captured in the adjacent preserves/parks were Dulzura Pocket Mouse (Jones & Stokes 2008a-c). This was the most abundant species captured during 2008. There is high potential for this species to occur at the Park.

San Diego Desert Woodrat (*Neotoma lepida intermedia*)

*State Species of Special Concern, San Diego County Group II*

During the 2008 trapping program, 12 of the 160 animals captured in the adjacent preserves/parks were San Diego desert woodrat (Jones & Stokes 2008a-c). There is high potential for this species to occur at the Park.

San Diego Black-Tailed Jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*)

*State Species of Special Concern, San Diego County Group I*

As suitable habitat for this species occurs within the Park, potential for this species to occur in the Park is high.

Mountain Lion (*Puma concolor*)

*San Diego County Group II, MSCP Covered Species*

As there is a large amount of open space surrounding the Park, potential for this species to move through the Park is high.

### **3.3.4 Non-native and/or Invasive Wildlife Species**

Non-native species detected at the Park include European starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) and wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*). Large numbers of European starlings use the Park for nesting and foraging with a total of 113 observations during point counts. This species will use woodpecker cavities for nests and can have negative effects on large cavity-nesting species (Unitt 2004).

A few individuals of house sparrow and wild turkey were observed, but neither species currently poses a threat to native avian populations at the Park. The effect of introduced wild turkeys on native species is unknown, however, house sparrows are potentially detrimental to native bird species as they compete aggressively for nest sites, not only evicting adult birds, but also destroying eggs and nestlings (Zeiner et al. 1990).

Additionally, while not detected in the 2008 surveys, brown-headed cowbirds (*Motothrus ater*) have the potential to occur within the Park. This species has expanded its range in California and become common in recent decades by following agriculture uses and presence of livestock (Zeiner et al. 1990), both of which are common within El Monte Valley. Brown-headed cowbirds are brood parasites that lay their eggs in nests of other birds and have the potential to lower the reproductive success of many passerine species, particularly warblers, vireos, flycatchers, and other sparrows and finches (Zeiner et al. 1990). They are known to parasitize ground nests as well as those in trees and shrubs, but not cavity nests.

### **3.4 Overall Biological and Conservation Value**

The Park lies within the Lake Jennings/Wildcat Canyon-El Cajon Mountain MSCP designated Core Biological Resource Area. Sixteen core biological resource areas and associated habitat linkages were identified in the MSCP study area. According to the MSCP Plan, core biological resource areas are defined as generally supporting a high concentration of sensitive biological resources which, if lost or fragmented, could not be replaced or mitigated elsewhere.

The Lake Jennings/Wildcat Canyon-El Cajon Mountain Core Biological Resource Area is adjacent to two habitat linkages: Interstate 8 at Lakeside which provides a connection to habitat south of Interstate 8; and Dehesa to El Capitan Reservoir which provides a connection to areas outside the South County MSCP boundary, and is an important corridor for species that occupy habitats other than coastal sage scrub.

To define the core and linkage areas, an extensive geographic information system database of vegetation communities, species locations, elevation, slope, soils, drainages, and other physical parameters were used to develop a habitat evaluation map for the study area. The habitat evaluation map ranks habitat areas as Very High, High, Moderate, or Low based on their potential to support priority gnatcatcher habitat, and wildlife corridors. According to the MSCP Habitat Evaluation Model, the habitat within the Park ranges from medium to very high in value.

The native vegetation communities within the Park have a high ecological value. The oak and riparian woodlands within the Park are considered MSCP Tier I habitat and provide suitable nesting habitat for several species of raptors and other birds within the Park. Diegan coastal sage scrub is considered MSCP Tier II habitat and is habitat for a variety of sensitive plant species as well as the federally-listed threatened coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*). However, due to habitat loss that resulted from the 2003 Cedar Fire, coastal sage scrub habitat within the Park is currently considered low quality and has a low potential to support gnatcatchers. In addition, the habitat features within the Park are highly supportive of a variety of rare and sensitive bat species.

#### **3.4.1 Wildlife Linkages and Corridors**

The Park is located in a relatively undeveloped area of San Diego County and abuts large preserve areas such as the Cleveland National Forest and the El Capitan Preserve. The Park occurs within the east-west trending upper San Diego River valley which is a wildlife corridor and provides local movement for a wide range of wildlife including mule deer, coyote, bobcat, and potentially mountain lion. Consequently, though the Park is located adjacent to some areas of developed land, it is considered to be within a core biological resource area and is adjacent to a regional biological linkage (Figure 3).

Movement of larger animals appeared to be concentrated along easily traveled routes with good visibility such as roads and ridges. Most signs of smaller animals were within natural communities with cover. No clear evidence of regular or important, larger-scale dispersal across the site was found, though such movement may well occur. Certainly it can be assumed that larger mammals regularly move on, off of, and across the Park, to and from adjacent open space. The existing fencing within the Park, as discussed in Section 2.4.1 (Figure 6), is an impediment to north-south movement across the Park; therefore, most movement through the Park more than likely occurs in an east-west trend.



## **4.0 CULTURAL RESOURCES**

San Diego County is characterized by a rich and varied historical past. Cultural resources which reflect this history consist of archaeological remains, historic buildings, artifacts, photographs, oral histories, Native American memories and public documents. This RMP identifies the known cultural resources within El Monte County Park and describes areas of potential resources.

In 2008, an archaeological survey was completed for the Park in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and County environmental guidelines to assist in continued and future land use and resource protection planning. The results of this study can be found in the report entitled, *Cultural Resources Phase I Survey and Inventory of County of San Diego El Capitan and Oakoasis Preserves and El Monte and Louis A. Stelzer Regional Parks, San Diego County, California*, dated October 2008, and is attached as Appendix B (Jordan and Eckhardt 2008). This Phase I inventory involved site records searches, literature reviews, Native American consultation, historic map checks, field survey, and resource documentation. The survey and inventory results were used in the preparation of this RMP.

### **4.1 Site History**

#### **4.1.1 Pre-Contact**

The Kumeyaay (Diegueño, Ipai, Tipai) Indians originally inhabited the Park and surrounding area. Their territory included San Diego County, Imperial County, and ranged 60 miles into northern Baja California. Descendants of these original Kumeyaay Indians from the El Monte Valley are part of the Barona and Viejas Band of Mission Indians. The Kumeyaay lived in this area for over 12,000 years. By utilizing resources from the mountains to the Pacific Coast, they had a successful and complex economic structure. Because the environment is rich and varied, the Kumeyaay remained hunter-gatherers until the time of contact with Europeans. El Monte Valley has a large number of pre-contact Kumeyaay sites.

#### **4.1.2 Post-Contact**

The area surrounding the Park was subject to the same dilemmas of land ownership as other parts of the County during the transition from Mexican to American governance. This area sat in the Rancho El Cajon (also spelled *Caxon*), which encompassed present day El Cajon, Bostonia, Flinn Springs, Lakeside, Santee and the area east of the Park. Originally part of the old Mission lands primarily used for grazing in these areas, 48,799 acres were granted to Maria Antonia Estudillo de Pedrorena, daughter of Don Jose Antonio Estudillo and Maria Victoria Dominguez of Old Town, by the then Mexican Governor Pio Pico in 1845. In response to the Land Act of 1851, Pedrorena submitted proof of her Mexican land grant to the government, and finally received the patent in 1876, along with Thomas W. Sutherland and various family members (BLM GLO record PLC 534/CACAAA

080718). In 1868, however, the rancho was purchased by Isaac Lankershim (Sweet 2009). While land was being distributed to Californios and new American immigrants by the U.S. government, the Kumeyaay who had moved to Capitan Grande in 1853 were formally given the El Capitan Indian Reservation by presidential order in 1875.

#### **4.1.3 The San Diego Flume and El Capitan Dam**

In the 1880s, the growing demands of the City of San Diego spurred the creation of the San Diego Flume Company. Charged with delivering water from the mountains to the city's burgeoning population, the company built the 35.6-mile San Diego Flume using Chinese workers from San Francisco to supply the heavy labor of dynamiting, digging tunnels, moving boulders, and generally preparing "the terrain for the carpenters and flume-layers who followed in their wake" (Adema 1993, Walker 2004). The increase in available water aided in the development of the nearby towns of Lakeside, Lakeview, El Cajon, and La Mesa.

Stretching from the San Diego River to Grossmont, the flume traversed 315 trestles and eight tunnels. Tunnel number 4, the Cape Horn Tunnel, is located on the southeastern margin of the Park. In 1910, Edward Fletcher and James Murray purchased the Flume Company and with it formed the Cuyamaca Water Company (Strathman 2004).

In 1925, engineers and City officials reported that the flume tunnels were in good condition. However, it was also observed that "the general condition of the wooden flume sections with maintenance applied as now being done, warrants assigning ten to fifteen years more life to the structure, barring accidents of a major nature" (Wray 1999). Plans were drawn in 1926 for the construction of an underground concrete and steel pipeline (City of San Diego 1926). That same year Edward Fletcher, after numerous failed attempts to sell his company to the City of San Diego, finally sold the Cuyamaca Water Company to the La Mesa, Lemon Grove, and Spring Valley Irrigation District in 1926 for \$1.2 million (Walker 2004).

In 1930, the California Supreme Court granted the City of San Diego all rights to San Diego River water and, with its water rights confirmed, the city began construction of the El Capitan Dam two miles east of the Park (Walker 2004). As part of this development effort, the United States Congress turned the El Capitan Grande Reservation land over to the City of San Diego and the Kumeyaay residents were removed in 1934 (Pico 2000). The Kumeyaay, who were by then known as Capitan Grande Indians, were relocated to today's Viejas and Barona reservations. The dam was completed in 1935 and the flume was finally closed in 1936, with the San Diego Union reporting that year that the pipeline was under construction and would be built on the same route as the flume (Sholders 2002).

#### **4.1.4 El Monte County Park History**

As San Diego County grew in the nineteenth century, people from all over the region began to seek recreational opportunities, and the El Cajon Valley offered an abundance of natural beauty. As part of the land speculation occurring throughout San Diego County in the 1880s, the owners of the “El Monte Rancho” or the “S” tract of Rancho El Cajon, which now comprises the Park, sold the former rancho to the El Cajon Valley Land Company in 1883. The land went undeveloped and was subsequently purchased in 1909 by Henry Timken. He, in turn, sold the land to the El Monte Ranch Company in 1915. In 1921, the 55 acres now housing the Park was purchased by the County with the intention of creating a park in the abundant oak groves. This action was spurred on by the El Monte Oaks Committee, which included prominent San Diegans like George Marston and Kate Sessions (Cohn 1988).

The San Diego Floral Association provided a caretaker for the new park, and the caretaker’s residence was the first facility constructed on the land. They also provided a comfort station until the County assumed management of the facility in 1923. In 1927, an additional 33 acres were acquired from H. A. and Mary Vanoni who stayed on as the Park caretakers. During their tenure, the County allowed Vanoni to operate a store and a bicycle concession for Park visitors. The store was kept open by Mary Vanoni until 1954. The Park was the site of numerous events including picnics and dances organized by private citizens, companies, and the military. During World War II, nearby Lindero Lake Park served as the base camp for Companies “D” and “F” of the 160<sup>th</sup> Infantry, which manned anti-aircraft guns protecting the El Capitan Dam. According to an unreferenced photocopy titled *General Plan Regional—Wooded Valley Picnic Park* on file at the Lakeside Historical Society, El Monte County Park offered mountain climbing and survival training for the troops.

After its return to recreational uses following World War II, the Park came under the management of the newly created Department of Parks and Recreation in 1946. New facilities and improvements soon followed, including a ranger’s residence and picnic facilities.

#### **4.2 Native American Consultation**

Native American participation and consultation in the 2008 study was initiated at the onset of background research and continued through the documentation and review process. Correspondence with the California Native American Heritage Commission did not indicate the presence of any Sacred Lands for the affected area, and recommended continuing consultation with Native American contacts. Letters were sent to all Native Americans on the list, plus several others identified as interested parties. No responses were received. Red Tail Monitoring and Research, Inc. provided Native American monitoring and archaeology services for this study

### **4.3 Cultural Resource Descriptions**

Two cultural resources are present within the project survey area: CA-SDI-13,606 consists of three granitic outcrops bearing prehistoric bedrock milling features; and CA-SDI-11,296 consists of a tunnel, tunnel portal and approach for the historic 1889 San Diego Flume. The prehistoric milling site was previously recorded and is located entirely within the Park boundary. The San Diego Flume tunnel portal and its short approach is a newly recorded element of a previously recorded linear resource that once extended some 35 miles from Boulder Creek to La Mesa Reservoir. A portion of the tunnel and the tunnel portal and approach are located within the Park.

#### **4.3.1 Archaeological Resources**

##### **CA-SDI-13,606**

This resource was first recorded in 1993 as a prehistoric site consisting of three locations with bedrock milling features situated on large outstanding boulders in the Park. In the current 2008 survey, all previously recorded features were relocated and examined. The bedrock milling features of CA-SDI-13,606 represent the worksites and tools of the Late Prehistoric Kumeyaay people who occupied the region prior to the mid-nineteenth century.

#### **4.3.2 Historical Resources**

##### **CA-SDI-11,296**

This resource is a component of the 1889 San Diego Flume that ran from the Cuyamaca Dam on Boulder Creek down the south side of the San Diego River to the La Mesa Reservoir. Approximately 2,300 feet of this alignment was previously recorded in 1989, consisting of a cut bank alignment nearly 15 feet in width, located to the east-northeast of the eastern boundary of the Park. An unspecified length of flume tunnel, the tunnel portal and a short approach are located within the Park.

The previously recorded location of the Flume was not observed during the 2008 survey, but a tunnel extending west from the recorded location was observed. The tunnel is identified on the 1903 Cuyamaca (scale 1:125,000) USGS map as the "Cape Horn Tunnel". The tunnel is nearly one-quarter mile in length, and this segment is a water conveyance tunnel through a saddle between a knoll and the slope of the river canyon. The tunnel portal is constructed of local granitic materials mortared together and also has a decorative mortar on the leading exterior of the portal. The opening is blocked with a grid of one-inch diameter rebar. A non-contributing length of poly vinyl chloride pipe penetrates the protective grid; this material is fairly recent. The maximum exterior dimensions of the portal are 11 feet wide by seven feet high, and the diameter of the tunnel aperture is six feet. Several occurrences of graffiti are visible on the portal, one dating to April 1953. On the south interior surface of the tunnel, some legible graffiti was noted, "APR. 53./ BOB



BEEMAN/ JERRY PALMR/ ANDY TRYER/ NORM TRAVEL". Writing was in what appeared to be white chalk or paint.

The interior of the tunnel has a height of six feet and is constructed of concrete with wooden ceiling beams set at undetermined intervals. Inside the tunnel, the floor is obscured with an undetermined measure of dried sediment. A short approach to the portal, connecting the former flume to the tunnel, has rock siding and likely had a concrete floor; the floor is no longer present and the bottom of the approach is the ground surface.

The original site form describes the cut bank and terraced slope alignment as all that remains of the flume, and mentions that some undergrounding of the water conveyance system was conducted in 1957. Visible to the south-southwest from the Cape Horn Tunnel feature are a few cut banks that appear to be in current use by recreationalists. One of the current trails cuts may be the original location of the cut bank alignment for this portion of the flume that continued along the slope of the San Diego River valley to the southwest.

The Cape Horn Tunnel is the fourth tunnel from the head of the flume and the first of the four named tunnels as shown on the 1903 Cuyamaca USGS 30' map: Cape Horn, Monte, Los Coches, and Lankesheim (Wray 1999). An engineer's report on the condition of the flume compiled by the City of San Diego in 1925 discusses the flume tunnels (Wray 1999). A photograph of "Tunnel No. 1" taken for the report shows the same portal design and an approach that appears to have been much longer than the approach at the Cape Horn Tunnel but is similar in form. The Cape Horn Tunnel, located at the edge of a steep slope, appears to have emptied into a flume trestle following its short approach. Much of the tunnel system was apparently destroyed by 1967, with *The Daily Californian* reporting on August 25<sup>th</sup> that the flume tunnels had been barred with iron grills as was the case with the Cape Horn Tunnel, bulldozed, or "blown up by a team of Navy SEALs."

#### **4.4 Resource Significance**

The two cultural sites identified within the 2008 survey have not been previously evaluated for resource importance, and resource testing to evaluate these resources was not conducted as part of this survey effort. The bedrock milling features of CA-SDI-13,606 represent the worksites and tools of Late Prehistoric Deigueño/Kumeyaay peoples who occupied the region prior to the mid-nineteenth century. The historic Cape Horn Tunnel feature of the 1889 San Diego Flume is representative of that particular time and period of economic development and engineering enterprise. According to the County of San Diego Guidelines, sites are considered significant until tested and determined otherwise (County of San Diego 2007).

## **5.0 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

### **5.1 Management Goals and Objectives**

Management of the natural and cultural resources within the Park will be guided by the general goals and objectives of both the County and the MSCP.

#### **5.1.1 County-Specific**

County-specific goals and objectives used to guide the management of resources within the Park can be found in the County Strategic Plan, the DPR Strategic Plan, as well as the Lakeside Community Plan. The County's overall goal or mission, as indicated in the 2009-2014 Strategic Plan, is to provide the residents of San Diego County with superior County services in terms of quality, timeliness and value in order to improve the region's quality of life. The Strategic Plan for Parks and Recreation is closely aligned with the County's strategic initiatives.

The DPR Strategic Plan 2008-2013, outlines the department's priorities for accomplishing its mission over a five-year period. The overall goal or mission of the DPR is to provide opportunities for high quality parks and recreation experiences and to preserve regionally significant natural and cultural resources. The DPR makes this mission a reality through programs that create healthy communities, protect valuable natural and cultural resources, provide recreation opportunities, reduce crime and vandalism, and foster economic development.

In addition, the Lakeside Community Plan provides goals and policies which are designed to fit the specific or unique circumstances existing within this community. Goals provided in this plan seek to preserve Lakeside's rural atmosphere and unique resources, and provide a wide variety of recreational activities and facilities which will meet the needs and enrich the lives of all residents of Lakeside. To this end, the plan provides policies and recommendations which are meant to guide the allocation of County resources towards prescribed outcomes consistent with the goals.

#### **5.1.2 MSCP-Related**

The MSCP Plan and the County's Subarea Plan provide both general and segment-specific goals and objectives. The Park is located within the Metro-Lakeside-Jamul Segment of the MSCP Subarea Plan and, as discussed in Section 3.4, lies between two habitat linkages within the Lake Jennings/Wildcat Canyon-El Cajon Mountain Core Biological Resource Area. The overall MSCP goal is to maintain and enhance biological diversity in the region and conserve viable populations of endangered, threatened, and key sensitive species and their habitat, thereby preventing local extirpation and ultimate extinction. This is intended to minimize the need for future listings, while enabling economic growth in the region.

In order to assure that the goal of the MSCP preserve is attained and fulfilled, management objectives for the County of San Diego MSCP preserve are as follows:

1. To ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of native ecosystem function and natural processes throughout the MSCP preserve.
2. To protect the existing and restored biological resources from disturbance-causing or incompatible activities within and adjacent to the MSCP preserve while accommodating compatible public recreational uses.
3. To enhance and restore, where feasible, the full range of native plant associations in strategic locations and functional wildlife connections to adjoining habitat in order to provide viable wildlife and sensitive species habitat.
4. To facilitate monitoring of selected target species, habitats, and linkages in order to ensure long-term persistence of viable populations of priority plant and animal species and to ensure functional habitats and linkages.
5. To provide for flexible management of the MSCP preserve that can adapt to changing circumstances to achieve the above objectives.

### **5.1.3 Management Directives and Implementation Measures**

Based on the above management goals and objectives, recommended management directives have been identified. In accordance with the Framework Management Plan, the ASMDs have been designated as Priority 1 or Priority 2. This designation recognizes the fact that many of the directives cannot be immediately implemented, but instead will occur over the life of the MSCP. The ability to implement and the timing of many of the management directives will be directly related to the availability of funding in any fiscal year and on the priority. The priorities are, therefore, intended to assist in decisions on where and how to spend limited funds. Priority designations are as follows:

**Priority 1:** Directives that protect the resources in the Park and the MSCP preserve, including management actions that are necessary to ensure that sensitive species are adequately protected.

**Priority 2:** Directives other than those required for sensitive species status and other long-term items that may be implemented during the life of the MSCP as funding becomes available.

The management directives provided in this RMP have been divided into five elements: A) Biological Resources, B) Vegetation Management, C) Public Use, Trails, and Recreation, D) Operations and Facility Maintenance, and E) Cultural Resources.

## **5.2 Biological Resources Element (A)**

### **5.2.1 Biological Monitoring**

Biological monitoring will be performed onsite to gather information that will assist DPR in making land management decisions to conform to MSCP goals and objectives, as well as DPR objectives. The biological monitoring that will occur will be designed to guide decisions at the individual preserve level. The first year of monitoring has been conducted (baseline surveys) and the results are included as Appendix A. Additional monitoring results will be incorporated into stand alone monitoring reports. These reports may recommend revisions to the management directives contained within this RMP.

It is recognized that subregional monitoring has been designed to answer concerns and objectives on a larger scale. No subregional monitoring is occurring at El Monte Park. While objectives of individual preserve and subregional monitoring may be different, subregional monitoring methods that have been developed, or are under development, may assist monitoring methods and decisions at the preserve level for particular species and habitats.

The key to successful monitoring at the individual preserve level, such that data gathered is not duplicative and meets individual preserve level objectives, is close coordination with stakeholder groups that are performing subregional monitoring, sharing of data, future plans and schedules and keeping abreast of monitoring methods as they are developed. To ensure uniformity in the gathering and treatment of data, a (SANDAG) land management working group has been formed and will designate a land manager who will assist jurisdictions in coordinating monitoring programs, analyzing data, and providing other information and technical assistance. The DPR will work closely with this group.

MSCP covered species have been prioritized for monitoring in the 2006 report prepared by San Diego State University (SDSU) entitled *San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program Covered Species Prioritization* (Regan et al. 2006). Subregional monitoring methods have been developed for rare plants (McEachern et al. 2007) and animals (USFWS 2008). These references will assist DPR in developing monitoring methods at the preserve level, as well as the management directives that are identified for specific species in this document.

### **Management Directive A.1 – Conduct habitat monitoring to ensure MSCP goals and DPR objectives are met (*Priority 1*)**

***Implementation Measure A.1.1:*** DPR will conduct habitat monitoring at five-year intervals. Habitat monitoring will address both temporary and permanent habitat changes as well as habitat value. The main product of this monitoring will be a report which will include a discussion of monitoring objectives, monitoring methods to meet those objectives, and an updated vegetation community map.



**Implementation Measure A.1.2:** DPR will conduct general wildlife and rare plant surveys at five-year intervals utilizing and refining baseline monitoring methods to facilitate trend and distribution status analysis. This information will be included in the habitat monitoring report.

**Implementation Measure A.1.3:** DPR will conduct monitoring for invasive plant species at five-year intervals to assess invasion or re-invasion by exotic plant species within the Park. These surveys will focus on areas where invasive, non-native plants have been detected in the past, but also look for new occurrences in the Park. This information will be included in the habitat monitoring report.

**Implementation Measure A.1.4:** DPR will conduct an assessment of the post-fire recovery and health of coastal sage scrub habitat within the Park.

**Management Directive A.2 – Conduct corridor monitoring to ensure MSCP goals and DPR objectives are met (*Priority 2*)**

As discussed in Section 3.4, even though the Park does not lie within a primary linkage, it is located within the Lake Jennings/Wildcat Canyon- El Cajon Mountain Core Biological Resource Area, which is adjacent to two biological linkages. Additionally, the Park is located within the San Diego River Valley which is a wildlife corridor for local wildlife movement. Due to existing fencing with the Park, the trend for local movement across the Park is likely east-west as north-south movement is impeded. Therefore, while corridor monitoring within the Park will take place at the preserve-level, it anticipated that it will provide data for better understanding movement on a regional scale.

**Implementation Measure A.2.1:** DPR will conduct corridor monitoring at five-year intervals in conjunction with habitat monitoring and general wildlife and rare plant surveys (as described in implementation measures A.1.1 and A.1.2). The main product of this monitoring will be a report documenting the results of the current assessment of habitat linkage function including a list of species detected.

**Management Directive A.3 – Meet the mitigation monitoring requirements of the Trail and Equestrian Staging Area Project oak tree planting (*Priority 1*)**

**Implementation Measure A.3.1:** As mitigation for impacts associated with the proposed trail and equestrian staging area project, DPR will plant coast live oak trees within a disturbed area in the northern portion of the Park in order to restore a total of 1.0 acre of disturbed habitat to coast live oak woodland. Irrigation lines will be installed within the restoration area to aid in establishment of the trees.

**Implementation Measure A.3.2:** DPR will monitor the planted oak trees within the restoration area quarterly for the first year and then once a year for a

minimum of three years. A report detailing the monitoring effort will be prepared annually.

**Implementation Measure A.3.3:** Once the planted oak trees are established, DPR will remove the installed irrigation lines within the restoration area.

### **5.2.2 MSCP Covered Species-Specific Monitoring and Management Conditions**

Not all species occurring within the Park are expected to require species-specific management. It is expected, rather, that other management directives and implementation measures outlined under the Biological Resources and Vegetation Management elements should be sufficient to protect and manage optimal habitat conditions for most, if not all, species to maintain and/or thrive within the Park. However, there are some species listed as MSCP Covered Species in the County's Subarea Plan which require additional management measures, particularly if monitoring indicates that the general guidelines are not sufficient to maintain acceptable population levels.

Table 3-5 of the Final MSCP Plan (City of San Diego 1998) provides management and/or monitoring measures for specific MSCP Covered Species. In addition, the SDSU Prioritization Report (Regan et al. 2006) classifies MSCP Covered Species as Risk Group 1 (most endangered), Risk Group 2 (moderately endangered), and Risk Group 3 (less endangered). The SDSU report also identifies the threats/risk factors facing these species and ranks these factors as high, moderate, or low degree of threat. This RMP will only discuss management conditions addressing high and moderate threats for Risk Group 1 species, none of which currently occur within the Preserve.

### **Management Directive A.4 - Comply with applicable conditions of coverage for MSCP Covered Species (Priority 1)**

**Implementation Measure A.4.1:** Implement the species-specific monitoring and management conditions as listed in Table 3-5 of the MSCP Plan (City of San Diego 1998) and the SDSU Prioritization Report (Regan et al. 2006) for all MSCP Covered Species detected within the Preserve.

The conditions of coverage for those species currently known to occur in the Park are listed below followed by an explanation of how monitoring and/or management activities in the Park will comply.

#### Western Bluebird (*Sialia mexicana*)

*Monitoring:* Table 3-5 - Habitat Based; SDSU - Excluded

*Management Conditions:* None

Southern California Rufous-Crowned Sparrow (*Aimophila ruficeps canescens*)

*Monitoring:* Table 3-5 - Habitat Based; SDSU - Risk Group 3

*Management Conditions:* Table 3-5 states area-specific management directives must include maintenance of dynamic processes, such as fire, to perpetuate some open phases of coastal sage scrub with herbaceous components.

Open phases of coastal sage scrub will be maintained through implementation of fire management practices as described in implementation measure B.4.4.

Southern Mule Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*)

*Monitoring:* Table 3-5 - Habitat Based and Corridor Sites; SDSU - Risk Group 3

*Management Conditions:* None

### 5.2.3 Non-Native Invasive Wildlife Species Control

#### **Management Directive A.5 – Reduce, control, or where feasible eradicate invasive, non-native fauna known to be detrimental to native species and/or the local ecosystem (*Priority 2*)**

Non-native species detected within the Park during the 2008 surveys include European starling, house sparrow and wild turkey. These species do not currently appear to be posing an immediate threat to native species and/or the local ecosystem and thus no management is proposed at this time. However, they do have potential to outcompete native species for valuable resources. In addition, with the introduction of equestrian uses at the Park and existing equestrian uses in the vicinity there is a potential for occurrence of brown-headed cowbirds within the Park.

***Implementation Measure A.5.1:*** Conduct surveys for the presence of invasive, non-native wildlife species of management concern, including European starling, house sparrow, and cowbirds, at five-year intervals in conjunction with habitat monitoring and general wildlife surveys (as described in implementation measures A.1.1 and A.1.2).

***Implementation Measure A.5.2:*** If an increase in the population of invasive, non-native wildlife species is noted and/or detrimental effects of these species are detected within the Park, preparation and implementation of a trapping and removal program, or other means of humane control will be initiated.

***Implementation Measure A.5.3:*** On a case-by-case basis, some limited trapping of non-native predators may be necessary at strategic locations, and where determined feasible to protect ground- and shrub-nesting birds, lizards, and other sensitive species from excessive predation. If implemented, the program would only be on a temporary basis and where significant problem has

been identified and therefore needed to maintain balance of wildlife in the Park and the MSCP preserve. The program would be operated in a humane manner, providing adequate shade and water, and checking all traps twice daily. Signage at access points and noticing of adjacent residents will inform people that trapping occurs, and how to retrieve and contain their pets.

**Implementation Measure A.5.4:** Once the proposed trail and equestrian staging area have been constructed, DPR will institute an equestrian education program regarding the potential negative impacts to native ecosystems from the accumulation of non-point source pollutants (e.g., increased potential for occurrence of cowbirds) in staging areas and on frequently used trails. This could be accomplished through implementation of a signage program and interaction between rangers and trail users. See also implementation measure B.3.2.

**Implementation Measure A.5.5:** Once the proposed trail and equestrian staging area have been constructed, DPR will provide materials for clean up by equestrian users of staging areas to keep it free of non-point source pollutants that may attract cowbirds or other invasive, non-native species. See also implementation measure B.3.3.

#### **5.2.4 Future Research**

The MSCP preserve presents a rich array of research opportunities for the academic and professional communities, primarily in disciplines related to biology, ecology, and natural resources management, but also ranging to environmental design, sociology, and park use and administration. The County of San Diego encourages research within the MSCP preserve in order to gain valuable information unavailable through other means.

There are a multitude of unanswered questions posed by the development of a multiple species and habitat system where little literature or previous research exists on the majority of species inhabiting the region. In addition, research on vegetation associations and habitats, natural regeneration, restoration, fragmentation, edge effects, genetics, viability, predation, wildlife movement, and much more, would be useful to provide information on the health and dynamics of an urbanized open space system as well as how to improve conditions.

#### **Management Directive A.6 – Allow for future research opportunities for the Academic and Professional Scientific and Biologic Activities within the Park (Priority 2)**

**Implementation Measure A.6.1:** DPR will accept and review proposals for scientific research, monitoring, and habitat restoration and enhancement activities which are permitted within the MSCP preserve. Proposed research activities will be subject to approval by DPR. All such activities must obtain any necessary permits and shall be consistent with this RMP. Additionally, any

person conducting research of any kind within the Park shall obtain a Right-of-Entry Permit from DPR, which will outline the precautions to be taken to preserve and protect sensitive biological and cultural resources within the Park and require results of any research to be made available to DPR.

### **5.3 Vegetation Management Element (B)**

#### **5.3.1 Habitat Restoration**

##### **Management Directive B.1 – Restore degraded habitats to protect and enhance populations of rare and sensitive species through stabilization of eroded lands and strategic revegetation (*Priority 1*)**

There are several potential targets for restoration activities within the Park. The first are areas that were previously dominated by native species now recovering from fire, and the second are areas that were cleared or dominated by non-native species prior to the fire. In addition, there are disturbed areas in the northern portion of the Park that are proposed for restoration as mitigation for the proposed trail and equestrian staging area project.

**Implementation Measure B.1.1:** DPR will assess and determine the need for restoration activities within the Park. The need for restoration activities will be determined based on the results of habitat monitoring (as described in implementation measure A.1.1) and trail maintenance activities (as described in implementation measure C.5.3). Any proposed restoration activities should utilize current, accepted techniques and avoid/minimize impacts to sensitive species or native habitats. Any proposed revegetation activities should use only local native species. No active restoration is currently needed. Passive restoration (recovery from fire) is ongoing.

#### **5.3.2 Non-Native Plant Species Removal and Control**

##### **Management Directive B.2 – Reduce, control, or where feasible eradicate invasive, non-native flora known to be detrimental to native species and/or the local ecosystem (*Priority 1*)**

Invasive non-native species detected within the Park during the 2008 surveys were most abundant within the southern coast live oak riparian woodland located along both sides of the San Diego River that flows in the northern area of the Park. Several large patches of tree tobacco, tamarisk and castor bean were found to be intermixed with the native plant species

**Implementation Measure B.2.1:** DPR park rangers will routinely pull weeds or remove any non-native plant species in early stages of growth found along trails. DPR will also coordinate with volunteer groups to do non-native plant species removal days at locations identified during invasive plant surveys and monitoring (as described in implementation measure A.1.3).



**Implementation Measure B.2.2:** DPR will coordinate with other agencies and non-profit organizations, such as the San Diego River Conservancy, in order to seek funding for implementation of larger invasive, non-native plant removal projects within the Park, as necessary.

**Management Directive B.3 – Manage and minimize the expansion of invasive, non-native flora within the Park (Priority 2)**

**Implementation Measure B.3.1:** DPR will implement an educational program for Park visitors and adjacent residents in order to discourage the introduction of invasive, non-native plants into the Park and MSCP preserve. Provided information will discuss invasive plants harmful to the Park and the MSCP preserve, and prevention methods. The program may also encourage residents to voluntarily remove invasive exotics from their landscaping. See also implementation measure D.7.1.

**Implementation Measure B.3.2:** Once the proposed trail and equestrian staging area have been constructed, DPR will institute an equestrian education program regarding the potential negative impacts to native ecosystems from the accumulation of non-point source pollutants (e.g., spread of non-native seeds) in staging areas and on frequently used trails. This could be accomplished through implementation of a signage program and interaction between rangers and trail users. Specific signage should state, “Don’t Plant a Pest! Feeding horses weed-free feed for at least 72 hours prior to park entry helps preserve our park”. See also implementation measure A.5.4.

**Implementation Measure B.3.3:** Once the proposed equestrian staging area has been constructed, DPR will provide materials such that users can keep staging areas free from non-point source pollutants that may spread non-native seeds. See also implementation measure A.5.5.

**5.3.3 Fire prevention, control, and management**

Current fire management activities within the Park include: brush management within the established fuel modification zone found within the southwest portion of the Park south of El Monte Road (see Figure 6), and regular mowing of the non-native grasses in the northern portion of the Park and removal of dead, dying and diseased material. In the event of a fire, adequate access to the Park is provided by existing paved roads. There are no fire breaks within the Park.

**Management Directive B.4 – Provide for necessary fire management activities that are sensitive to natural and cultural resources protection (Priority 1)**

**Implementation Measure B.4.1:** The County will maintain the established fuel modification zone on Park property adjacent to the existing residential structures that are within 100 feet of the Park boundary. The intent of a fuel modification

zone is to protect habitable structures adjacent to the Park from wildfires. It may further protect the resources within the Park by absorbing some of the “edge effects” that might otherwise occur within the Park.

Management of the fuel modification zone will adhere to CAL FIRE and/or Lakeside Fire Protection District requirements.

**Implementation Measure B.4.2:** Park staff will prune the lower dead branches from oak trees, and hand clear the build-up of shrubby vegetation beneath the oaks located within the developed portion of the Park with the help of certified arborists to ensure the health of the trees. Build-up of vegetation could lead to crown fires which would destroy the oaks, along with seedlings and saplings. Care must be taken to protect oak tree root zones, and ensure that mature oak trees or oak tree recruitment are not affected.

**Implementation Measure B.4.3:** The existing paved access roads will be maintained annually to keep them fuel free. In addition, DPR will continue to coordinate with CAL FIRE and/or the Lakeside Fire Protection District to determine what improvements need to be made to make fire response feasible throughout the Park.

**Implementation Measure B.4.4:** Vegetation management is not a current need within the Park to address wildfire issues as vegetation is continuing to recover after the 2003 Cedar Fire and is anticipated to be fire-resistant for the next 10 to 15 years. The need for vegetation management will be assessed through implementation measure A.1.1. DPR will coordinate with CAL FIRE and/or the Lakeside Fire Protection District to assess the future need to develop an integrated Vegetation Management Plan that will allow environmental documentation for strategic fuels management to be conducted if, and when, needed. A Vegetation Management Plan will also identify likely locations for equipment staging areas and fire breaks, assisting fire fighting activities to avoid known cultural sites, if feasible.

## **5.4 Public Use, Trails, and Recreation Element (C)**

### **5.4.1 Public Access**

**Management Directive C.1 – Limit types of public uses to those that are appropriate for the site (Priority 1)**

**Implementation Measure C.1.1:** The following public uses are prohibited in the Park. Park rangers are responsible for enforcing these restrictions and may call the sheriff for legal enforcement, as appropriate.

- a. Off-road or cross-country vehicle and public off-highway recreational vehicle activity are considered incompatible uses in the MSCP preserve,

and are therefore prohibited in the Park, except for law enforcement, Park management, and/or emergency purposes.

- b. Hunting or discharge of firearms is an incompatible use in the MSCP preserve, and is therefore prohibited in the Park, except for law enforcement, and/or emergency purposes.
- c. Poaching or collecting plant or animal species, archaeological or historical artifacts or fossils from the Park is generally prohibited; however, the County may authorize collecting upon approval for scientific research, revegetation or restoration purposes, or species recovery programs. In addition, impacts to historic features are prohibited except upon approval by the County.
- d. Fishing, swimming, and wading in the San Diego River
- e. Camping (including homeless and itinerant worker camps)
- f. Feeding wildlife
- g. Domestic animals, except horses and leashed dogs
- h. Smoking
- i. Campfires/Open Flames
- j. Off-trail biking, hiking or equestrian use
- k. Littering

**Implementation Measure C.1.2:** Prohibited uses will be clearly specified on kiosks, signage and/or trail maps.

**Management Directive C.2 – Manage public access in sensitive biological and cultural resource areas within the Park (Priority 1)**

DPR has plans to develop a multi-use (hiking, biking, and equestrian) trail and equestrian staging area within the Park (Figure 6). This project would include the construction of an approximately one-mile trail linkage within the southern portion of the Park and a 1.4-acre equestrian staging area in the northwest area of the Park. The trail and staging area have been designed to avoid sensitive biological and cultural resources within the Park.

**Implementation Measure C.2.1:** DPR has identified and mapped narrow endemics and critical populations, and all covered species populations in the Park so that these areas can be avoided and/or monitored. Updated information on sensitive species in relation to public access points will be obtained during general wildlife and rare plant surveys in conjunction with habitat monitoring (as described in implementation measures A.1.1 and A.1.2).

**Implementation Measure C.2.2:** DPR will ensure that any new public-use trails and staging areas are designed and constructed to avoid and/or minimize impacts to sensitive biological and cultural resource areas.

**Implementation Measure C.2.3:** DPR will provide sufficient signage to clearly identify public access to the Park. Barriers such as vegetation, rocks/boulders or fencing may be necessary to protect highly sensitive areas. The appropriate types of barriers to be used will be determined based on location, setting and use.

**Implementation Measure C.2.4:** Park ranger staff will ensure park users picnic within the developed portion of the Park in order to minimize littering, feeding of wildlife, and attracting or increasing populations of exotic or nuisance wildlife (e.g., opossums, raccoons, skunks).

### **Management Directive C.3 – Provide appropriate interpretive and educational materials (Priority 2)**

**Implementation Measure C.3.1:** DPR will share outreach and educational information and notify the public of volunteer opportunities that advance the management, monitoring, and stewardship resources available, and objectives of this RMP. This information will be provided on the DPR website, [www.sdparks.org](http://www.sdparks.org).

**Implementation Measure C.3.2:** Opportunities for educational trail-side signage and educational kiosks will be identified within the Park. In addition, signage provided at access points and on trails maps provides a form of education. See also implementation measures E.2.4 and E.3.1.

**Implementation Measure C.3.3:** When possible, park rangers assigned to this Park should organize and conduct interpretative walks or programs within the Park. During these interpretative walks or programs the ranger should distribute the “Living Close to Nature” brochure. This brochure discusses how to live in harmony with wildlife. The interpretative walks and programs should be conducted in accordance with park ranger availability.

### **5.4.2 Fencing and Gates**

Currently, the Park is fenced along both sides of El Monte Road with a gated vehicle entrance along the south side of the road. The central developed portion of the Park is also fenced. Additionally, fencing will be installed in the northern portion of the Park surrounding the proposed equestrian staging area (see Figure 6).

### **Management Directive C.4 – Install and maintain fencing and gates within the Park (Priority 1)**

**Implementation Measure C.4.1:** DPR will install fencing around the proposed equestrian staging area in the northern portion of the Park.

**Implementation Measure C.4.2:** DPR will replace the portion of existing barbed wire fencing along the north side of El Monte Road with chain link fencing to match the remainder of fencing in this area.

**Implementation Measure C.4.3:** Ranger staff will install fencing and/or gates at points of unauthorized public access as appropriate. Points of unauthorized access will be identified in conjunction with trail monitoring activities (as described in implementation measure C.5.1).

**Implementation Measure C.4.4:** Ranger staff will regularly inspect and maintain all fencing and gates within the Park. Fencing segments and gates will be repaired or replaced as necessary.

### **5.4.3 Trail and Access Road Maintenance**

Currently, there is one public road, El Monte Road, which provides access to the Park. A gated entrance, paved driveway and parking areas exist within the developed portion of the Park, but there are no other existing access roads or trails that provide access to the property. However, DPR is proposing to construct a multi-use trail and equestrian staging area within the Park. Opening of the trail system will be contingent on funding.

### **Management Directive C.5 – Properly maintain public access roads, staging areas and trails for user safety, to protect natural and cultural resources, and to provide high-quality user experiences (Priority 1)**

**Implementation Measure C.5.1:** Ranger staff will monitor trails for degradation and off-trail access and use, and provide necessary repair/maintenance in accordance with the Community Trails Master Plan (County of San Diego 2005).

**Implementation Measure C.5.2:** Where rerouting of a trail is deemed necessary for maintenance or remediation, rerouting actions will be accompanied by educational support, and public notification through signs and public meeting announcements. An implementation schedule should be written by DPR Operations staff when maintenance or remediation is deemed necessary.

The trail will be posted with signage that indicates rerouting and the primary reason for the reroute (e.g., erosion issues, and sensitive biological resource impacts). Finally, signs should provide contact information for anyone wishing to provide input on trail use or gain additional information regarding rerouting of trails.

Once posted, the trails in need of maintenance should be blocked with split rail fencing or rock borders. These blocks should be constructed in a manner that



helps to prevent circumvention. Enforcement of trail rerouting would require increased ranger patrols of these areas and investigations to determine if the barriers are effective.

**Implementation Measure C.5.3:** DPR will restore degraded habitats and reduce detrimental edge effects through maintenance and stabilization of trails, and strategic revegetation as needed. Measures to counter the effects of trail erosion may include the use of stone or wood cross-joints, edge plantings of native grasses, and mulching of the trail in accordance with the Community Trails Master Plan (County of San Diego 2005). See also implementation measure B.1.1.

**Implementation Measure C.5.4:** If unauthorized trail formation is observed by ranger staff, those specific areas will be posted with clear signage reminding the public to remain on authorized trails.

**Implementation Measure C.5.5:** Park ranger staff will monitor the El Monte Road right-of-way and public access roads within the Park for degradation and/or off-road access and use. DPR will contact the County's Department of Public Works for any required maintenance to the El Monte Road right-of-way. See also implementation measure B.4.3.

#### **5.4.4 Signage and Lighting**

##### **5.4.4.1 Signs**

#### **Management Directive C.6 – Develop, install, and maintain appropriate signage to effectively communicate important information to Park visitors (*Priority 1*)**

Signs educate, provide direction, and promote sensitive resources and enjoyment of natural areas. Types of signs within the Park may include those necessary to: protect sensitive biological and cultural resources (see A.5.4, B.3.2 and E.2.4); provide educational and interpretive information (see C.3.2 and E.3.1); explain rules of the Park (see C.1.2 and D.2.1); direct public access (see C.2.3 and C.5.4); and, provide Parks operations information (see A.5.3 and C.5.2).

**Implementation Measure C.6.1:** Park ranger staff will regularly inspect and maintain all posted signs within the Park in good condition. Signs shall be kept free from vandalism and will be repaired or replaced as necessary.

##### **5.4.4.2 Lighting**

Artificial lighting adversely impacts habitat value of the Park and MSCP preserve, particularly for nocturnal species. Therefore, lighting should not be permitted in the Park except where essential for roadways, facility, use, and safety.

**Management Directive C.7 – Provide appropriate lighting within the Park (Priority 2)**

**Implementation Measure C.7.1:** Low pressure sodium illumination sources or low energy alternatives should be used within the Park, while avoiding low voltage outdoor or trail lights, spot lights, or bug lights. All existing lighting sources within the Park should be retrofitted with low pressure sodium illumination sources or low energy alternatives, as appropriate. These lighting sources should be directed away from the MSCP preserve areas within the Park.

**5.5 Operations and Facility Maintenance Element (D)****5.5.1 Litter/Trash and Materials Storage****Management Directive D.1 – Maintain a safe and healthy environment for Park users (Priority 1)**

**Implementation Measure D.1.1:** Trash receptacles will be provided and maintained at all parking, staging, and picnic areas. Trash receptacles should be designed to be secure from intrusion by wildlife species. Ranger staff will regularly empty trash receptacles at least once a week or more/less as deemed necessary.

**Implementation Measure D.1.2:** The permanent storage of hazardous and toxic materials within the Park will be prohibited. Any temporary storage must be in accordance with applicable regulations, and otherwise designed to minimize any potential impacts.

**Management Directive D.2 – Publicize and enforce regulations regarding littering/dumping (Priority 1)**

**Implementation Measure D.2.1:** Lists of regulations will be provided to Park users (e.g., posted on kiosks or at the ranger station) clearly stating that littering within the Park is illegal, and will provide appropriate DPR contacts to report any littering observed.

**Implementation Measure D.2.2:** Regulations regarding littering/dumping will be enforced by park rangers (County Code of Regulatory Ordinance Section 41.116). Penalties for littering and dumping will be imposed by law enforcement officers sufficient to prevent recurrence and reimburse costs to remove and dispose of debris, restore the area if needed, and pay for additional DPR staff time. Areas where dumping recurs will be evaluated for potential barrier placement. Additional monitoring and enforcement will be provided as needed.

### 5.5.2 Hydrological Management

Native habitats in the MSCP preserve have evolved, in part, on the distribution and flow characteristics of water. MSCP preserve property should be managed to maintain existing natural drainages and watershed and to restore or minimize changes to natural hydrological processes. Proposed structures and activities should be evaluated for effects on hydraulics, and remedial actions should be taken as needed. Best Management Practices should be used both within and outside the preserve system to maintain water quality.

#### **Management Directive D.3 – Retain San Diego River in its natural condition (Priority 1)**

**Implementation Measure D.3.1:** Any proposed structures and/or activities shall avoid the San Diego River located in the northern portion of the Park and maintain a minimum 200-foot buffer which will be managed in accordance with the MSCP. No future Park development is proposed within this buffer area. Potential threats to jurisdictional waters from any activities shall be identified and impacts avoided or minimized to the maximum extent practicable.

### 5.5.3 Emergency, Safety and Police Services

The Framework Management Plan explains that the interface between current and future urban development and MSCP preserve areas requires increased coordination between the preserve managers and agencies responsible for public safety. The MSCP preserve system, including the Park, must accommodate access for emergency response and fire control and management. In the event that entry into the Park by law enforcement agencies is needed in the routine performance of their duties, use of existing roads and trails should be encouraged. In emergencies where there is a direct threat to public safety, the law enforcement agency should contact DPR whenever feasible.

Law enforcement and fire control agencies, the National Guard, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS), the Border Patrol, and organizations and agencies that respond to natural disasters shall be permitted to perform their activities within any preserve system subject to all applicable requirements of state and federal law.

#### **Management Directive D.4 – Maintain or increase the ability of emergency response personnel to deal with emergencies within the Park or vicinity (Priority 1)**

**Implementation Measure D.4.1:** Law enforcement officials will be invited to access Park property as necessary to enforce the law. If it becomes apparent that extensive enforcement activities are necessary, DPR will coordinate with the applicable agencies to inform field personnel of how to minimize damage to particularly sensitive resources.

**Implementation Measure D.4.2:** All medical, rescue, and other emergency agencies will be allowed to access Park property to carry out operations necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public. Access issues are further discussed in implementation measure B.4.3.

**Management Directive D.5 – Provide for a safe recreational experience for Park visitors (Priority 1)**

**Implementation Measure D.5.1:** In the event of a natural disaster, such as a fire or flood, Park ranger staff shall only evacuate the Park upon direction of the Emergency Operations Center. The Park may provide a shelter in place from fire. Staff will coordinate with the local agency in charge of responding to the emergency and, if possible, assist where necessary.

**Implementation Measure D.5.2:** DPR will implement the Site Emergency Response Plan (SERP) prepared for the Park. The SERP is on file with the DPR.

**Implementation measure D.5.3:** Work with the County Sheriff to implement Crime Prevention through Environmental Design recommendations, as needed.

**5.5.4 Adjacency Management Issues**

As described in Section 2.4.2, there is currently only limited development immediately contiguous to the Park. The establishment of the MSCP preserve system does not include regulatory authority on properties adjacent to the Park; however, the County will require adjacent property owners to follow guidelines when planning and implementing uses and activities that can be regulated when located immediately adjacent to the site.

**Management Directive D.6 – Coordinate with adjacent open space land managers (Priority 1)**

**Implementation Measure D.6.1:** DPR will coordinate with the Center for Natural Lands Management (land manager for the adjacent Blossom Valley Habitat Conservation Area Preserve) on an annual basis, or more regularly as needed, to ensure the contiguous preserved land is managed consistently and in accordance with MSCP.

**Management Directive D.7 - Enforce Park and MSCP preserve boundaries (Priority 1)**

**Implementation Measure D.7.1:** DPR will enforce, prevent, and remove illegal intrusions into the Park and MSCP preserve (e.g., orchards, decks) on an annual basis, in addition to a complaint basis.

**Management Directive D.8 – Educate residents of surrounding areas regarding adjacency issues (Priority 2)**

**Implementation Measure D.8.1:** DPR will provide information on this RMP to residents adjacent to the Park to heighten environmental awareness, and inform residents of access, appropriate landscaping, construction or disturbance within the Park boundaries, pet intrusion, fire management, and other adjacency issues. This RMP will also be accessible on the DPR website and will thus be available to adjacent residents and to the general public.

**5.6 Cultural Resources Element (E)**

DPR is charged with preserving, managing, and interpreting the archaeological and historic resources at the Park for the benefit of San Diego County residents. DPR will strive to meet the highest standards for preservation, access, interpretation, and research established for sites of exceptional significance within the resources available.

**Management Directive E.1 – Identify, record, and assess the significance of all cultural resources within the Park (Priority 2)**

**Implementation Measure E.1.1:** Assess each known cultural site within the Park for eligibility as a Historical Landmark, and to the California Resources Historic Register/National Register of Historic Places.

**Implementation Measure E.1.2:** Conduct oral histories of the descendents of recent owners to better establish the American Ranching period history of El Monte Valley.

**Implementation Measure E.1.3:** Additional research at site CA-SDI-11,296 and along the entire flume will be encouraged. This should include additional field measures to map and record the tunnel and its associated features. Pursuit of local designation of this site by the Historic Site Board will also be encouraged.

**Management Directive E.2 – Preserve and protect significant cultural resources to ensure that sites are available for appropriate uses by present and future generations (Priority 2)**

**Implementation Measure E.2.1:** Threats to the cultural resources from natural (e.g., fire, erosion, floods) or human-caused events shall be identified, and impacts prevented, reduced, eliminated, or adverse effects mitigated. Safeguards against incompatible land and resource uses shall be identified to protect all cultural resources.

**Implementation Measure E.2.2:** The condition and status of cultural resources shall be noted as part of routine monitoring activities conducted once a year and remedial measures shall be taken if damage is noted. Monitoring activities



should also photo-document site conditions so that comparisons can be made over time. Any monitoring of the sites in the Park will follow the guidelines used by the Department of Public Works, which are found in the County of San Diego *Report Format and Content Requirements, Cultural Resources: Archaeological and Historical Resources* (2007).

All site location information will be kept strictly confidential, and will be available only for qualified cultural resource staff and land managers. Site locations will not be shown on maps or divulged to the public.

**Implementation Measure E.2.3:** All management activities within the Park including, but not limited to, trail construction and maintenance, placement of fencing and gates, and restoration of habitat will take into consideration potential impacts to cultural resources and shall avoid adverse impacts to any cultural resources to the maximum extent possible. No ground disturbing activities will be allowed on or in any cultural resource site within the Park until the impacts have been assessed.

If avoidance is not feasible, appropriate mitigation measures will be established. Removal or disturbance of cultural resources shall not occur prior to completion of an approved mitigation program, such as data recovery or recordation. Preservation in place is the preferred mitigation measure.

**Implementation Measure E.2.4:** Signs shall be posted at kiosks, trail heads and/or throughout the Park to notify users that sensitive cultural resources within the Park cannot be damaged and that removal of any archaeological material is prohibited by law. Protection and preservation of cultural resources will comply with County of San Diego ordinances (Title 4; Public Property, Division 1; Parks and Beaches, Article 2, Section 41.113), and applicable state and federal laws, which will be enforced by the appropriate law enforcement authorities.

The County will ensure that park ranger staff has sufficient training through the DPR Ranger Academy to actively protect archaeological sites from vandalism and other forms of human impact. If a Park user is suspected of vandalism to cultural resources, the appropriate law enforcement authorities shall be notified. More aggressive measures may be needed if vandalism and damage continue or increase.

**Implementation Measure E.2.5:** Develop a treatment plan, including proactive protection and preservation procedures, for all cultural resources within the Park. This plan should provide specific protocols to address sites CA-SDI-11,296 (San Diego Flume), CA-SDI-13,605 (historic El Monte Park and prehistoric bedrock milling), and CA-SDI-13,606 (prehistoric bedrock milling). These sites, because of their proximity to proposed trail systems and other Park facilities, are at risk for indirect impacts to cultural resources due to site vandalism or unintentional damage brought upon by unknowing patrons' activities.

**Management Directive E.3 – Promote the beneficial uses of cultural resources through interpretation and educational programs (*Priority 2*)**

***Implementation Measure E.3.1:*** Off-site, and when possible, on-site interpretive programs for Native American heritage, local and regional history, and prehistory will be developed for the Park. These may include lectures, walks, kiosks, signs, historic brochures, and displays, but will not include excavations, collecting of artifacts, or disclosure of confidential site locations unless an interpretive plan is developed and approved by the Director of Parks and Recreation. The plan will include supervision by a qualified archaeologist approved by the Director of Parks and Recreation. See also implementation measures C.3.1-3.

**Management Directive E.4 – Honor Native American Heritage and promote Native American ceremonies, gathering, and cultural practices (*Priority 2*)**

***Implementation Measure E.4.1:*** Consultation with the Barona and Viejas Band of Mission Indians shall be conducted frequently in order to identify appropriate management of pre-contact and ethnographic cultural resources. The tribes will be encouraged to participate in evaluation, recordation, protection and preservation of cultural resources.

***Implementation Measure E.4.2:*** The County will open the Park to traditional uses by the Barona and Viejas Band of Mission Indians. All activities by Native Americans in the Park shall be conducted with a Right-of-Entry permit specifically designed for the Park.

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